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OCTOBER 2009

The American Conservative



PAKISTAN
Terror's Tipping Point

SNEAK PREVIEW
RON PAUL'S
End the Fed

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FALSE ALARM

Brendan O'Neill's essay (August) is ironically alarmist. Peer-reviewed scientific studies about climate change are hardly the politics of fear, but throwing around the term "green-industrial complex" is.

Unfortunately most issues in U.S. politics have been co-opted by industry. The recall of Vioxx is a fine example of how the FDA erred on the side of the corporate interests and not of the people. To his credit, O'Neill exposed the shortcomings of carbon offsetting.

But the piece would have been more insightful had it stuck to substantive criticisms rather than finger-pointing and dramatizing the environmental movement as hindering individual initiative.

LEELA HEBBAR

Palo Alto, Calif.

ALL WET

Dr. Steven Johnson says in his September *TAC* letter that waterboarding is not torture. I think he would change his opinion if forced to watch a family member being waterboarded. His limited definition of torture—actions that leave the victim deformed or dysfunctional—would mean that a root canal without anesthesia is not torture. Bones could be broken and then set, leaving no dysfunction. Johnson wants "the agony of the enemies" to be a high priority. How primitive and pathetic.

If someone said Arabs should not be allowed to enter this country as a security measure, he would be condemned for racial profiling. But torturing those same people gets a pass.

PERRY LORENZ

Fort Collins, Colo.

BACK IN THE USSA

Dennis Dale should go to the head of the class for mentioning the "Sovietization" of the U.S. economy ("Endless Summers," September). Twenty years after the "fall" of communism, the ideas of Karl Marx are more alive than ever.

Leaders of so-called democratic countries don't recognize their intellectual

currency as Marxian. They think it's just part of the natural growth of capitalism. (And, in a certain sense, it is.) Most of today's politicians assume that Marxism can be preempted by an expertly managed welfare state. They are wrong. Once the Marxian ideas on bigness (read: "too big to fail") and central planning (read: national healthcare "reform" and Federal Reserve as super regulator) are accepted, then "Sovietization" has arrived. The revolution may not be in Marx's name, but the ideas behind it are his.

JAMES MOSHER

Ledyard, Conn.

JUDGE NOT

Michael P. Farris's article "New World Playpen" (September) must be viewed in light of his work as president of ParentalRights.org, which only hears the parents' side of dependency cases filed to protect children who are being abused, abandoned, or neglected. Rarely are parents objective in presenting the facts to third parties about abuse of their children.

Based on parents' claims, ParentalRights.org opines that judges are not considering parents' rights. But because dependency cases are confidential, ParentalRights.org is barred from access to evidence presented in court.

The primary goal in dependency cases is reunification. In my 50 years, divided between practicing as an attorney representing parents and presiding as a judge, only in the most egregious cases are children permanently removed.

THOMAS M. GALLEN

Senior Circuit Judge

Bradenton, Fla.

Michael P. Farris replies:

I have personal knowledge of the dependency cases cited in my article. In the case involving the 13-year-old boy and church visitation, I was trial counsel for the parents. I can verify that the only issue in the case was church attendance. The other case resulted in a reported decision of the Supreme Court of Wash-

ington, upon which my analysis relies. In addition, the daughter who had been the subject of the dependency order testified, at my request, before the Senate and pleaded for the protection of parental rights.

The judge's argument is that there must be more to these cases. Reading his letter convinces me that if he had been the judge, neither of these egregious orders would have been issued. However, my 33 years of practice in litigating parental rights demonstrates that not only did these cases happen as portrayed, they are not isolated incidents.

LEFT CONS?

Thank you for printing articles written by Andrew Bacevich.

I have decided, as a left-leaning liberal of lifelong standing, I'm going to start talking with my fellow Americans who are true conservatives—not neoliberal conservatives nor neoconservative conservatives but people who want the government, not multinational corporations, running the government; who don't think we need an empire in every corner of the globe; and who believe patients should get medical treatment like they used to in my childhood. Doctors did not feel the need to hold conferences at Steve Wynn's casino—they were busy giving care. If they took a family vacation, they drove to Florida and stayed in a Howard Johnson, not some palatial spa. And patients used common sense. Trial lawyers did not dictate the terms of care or ruin good doctors' reputations.

I live near Dayton, Ohio, and I'm hard put to find real conservatives here: the local ones tend to be market-rules-all quasi-conservatives.

CINDY WINEBURGH

Via e-mail

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

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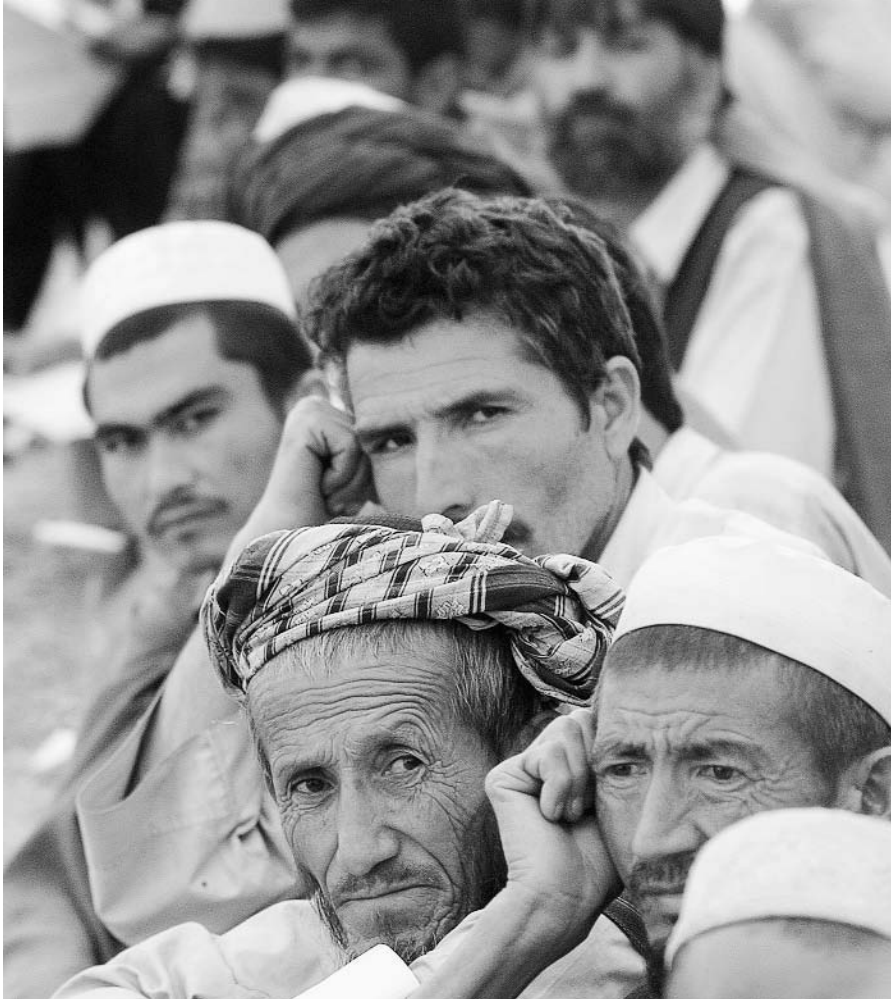
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AFP PHOTO

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COVER PHOTO: AFP COVER DESIGN: MARK GRAEF

[GRASSROOTS]

THE ZOMBIES ATE MY TOWNHALL

At your congressman's healthcare townhall, don't look too prepared. He might think your mind is controlled by the vast right-wing conspiracy.

With legislators out in the provinces facing their constituents, conservative groups rallied supporters to crank up the heat on the sponsors of so-called reform. They sent out information on where to show up and suggested questions. Thousands turned out.

Pundits and editorial pages pondered the parking-lot rebellions. Was this a genuine revival of civic participation or were Beltway interest groups pulling the strings, using John and Jane Citizen as unwitting pawns?

When the Left organizes labor groups, minorities, and college students, there is little doubt that it taps into the heartfelt concerns of these constituencies. No commentator questioned President Obama's exhortation to his list of campaign supporters to stand up "against the angry mobs being directed by Republican operatives in Washington to disrupt events." Liberal political organizing is portrayed as sincere. But when middle-class Americans assemble and vent their frustration, the Right is engaging in some kind of hypnosis.

In truth, there is nothing the matter with Kansans. These little platoons—whether fighting for Left or Right—facilitate what Tocqueville called the art of association and suggest that American democracy is healthy indeed.

[BUSINESS]

FACTORY HEALTHCARE

The whole point of Whole Foods is that some people like boutique grocery shopping—free-range, fair-trade, mood-lit—and don't mind paying for it. It's hard to put a price tag on the moral smugness



that comes from munching Tofurkey hauled in a canvas sack.

Now these tolerant types would never mandate that everyone start the day with a hearty bowl of puffed Kashi. But they'll argue with religious zeal that consumers need alternatives to the assembly line. It's all about local solutions and innovative approaches.

Unless we're talking about healthcare, that is. Here it must be single-payer—no diversity, no discussion. So Whole Foods CEO John Mackey learned when he published an op-ed venturing some free-market ideas for expanding healthcare.

The Left was outraged, and the reaction was surprisingly fierce for a population fueled by organic amaranth. Boycott! No matter that this is the grocery chain most aligned with the larger progressive agenda.

Problem is, the protesters couldn't claim to be heroically abstaining from Earth Day Mint Green Tea because Mackey was oppressing his employees. Those on the bottom Whole Foods rung earn \$13.15 per hour, report higher job satisfaction than their unionized confrères—and have health insurance. The Obamatons were offended that anyone would entertain options. And by the way, they suddenly noticed, Whole Foods is expensive. Apparently checking all the PC boxes while also providing a deluxe benefits package shouldn't raise prices.

They bring that delusion to the national debate. Americans can have it all: quality healthcare at reduced costs—as long as no one dares to tell the whole truth.

[LIBERTIES]

GUNS OF AUGUST

"As you can see, I'm a proud NRA member," the questioner told the president, gesturing to his lapel. Some of the audience cheered. Obama managed an awkward grin. The Montana townhall meeting was scheduled to promote the healthcare bill. Why were guns part of the conversation?

Later in the month, outside similar presidential appearances in New Hampshire and Arizona, demonstrators openly brandished firearms in an attempt to draw attention to the cause of gun rights. Applications for concealed-weapon permits are up nearly 50 percent in some jurisdictions.

There clearly is widespread anxiety about what the Obama administration and Democratic Congress have in mind for Americans' guns. In July, the Senate rejected a bill enforcing universal recognition of concealed-weapon permits across state borders. It was an unconventional debate in which liberal senators invoked states' rights while conservatives insisted that the federal government should enforce a universal right, state regulatory variations be damned.

In the wake of last year's *Heller* decision, which overturned the D.C. firearms ban, the Supreme Court is expected to take up another gun-rights case. The question is whether the Second Amendment prohibits states from regulating firearms, and once again the court is likely to remove a policy debate from the realms of politics and localities. Conservatives have reason to be concerned about overbearing gun regulations, but should be leery of asking for enforcement of a

universal right from on high. The judicial expansion of rights, as seen in the invocation of privacy in *Roe*, is a dangerous way to make policy. One day, the court could easily squint at a phrase like “equal protection” and see a right to healthcare. When that happens, we’ll be wishing for the good old days of rowdy townhall meetings.

[LIFE]

WHAT CHOICERS WANT

On Aug. 13, Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards visited the White House for a “special meeting . . . to discuss women and health insurance reform.”

Her group endorsed and funded Obama ahead of Hillary Clinton in last year’s elections. Now Richards had come to collect, and she emerged in high spirits. “We’re fighting for real healthcare change,” she gushed to her pals on Facebook.

She did not say that Planned Parenthood would directly benefit from the pending legislation, but pro-life groups are right to worry. When Richards writes, “women need health care that covers all OUR needs,” she is referring—at least in part—to the use of federal funds to pay her organization to provide abortions on a massive scale. Planned Parenthood carried out nearly 300,000 abortions last year and received \$336 million in taxpayer funds. Under Obamacare, with more government-backed insurance schemes guaranteeing “women’s reproductive health,” those subsidies aren’t likely to shrink. Some reports suggest, moreover, that under Title V (“other provisions”) of the legislation, federal money could be spent to build Planned Parenthood facilities in or near schools.

Maybe Richards knows that for all of Obama’s protests against special interests getting in the way of reform, he is not averse to serving his friends a piece of healthcare pie.

[RIP]

HEAVENS & NOVAK

America lost one of its last great newspapermen on Aug. 18. *TAC* also lost a friend and contributor. “Bob Novak was the finest reporter-columnist of his generation,” Pat Buchanan remembered. “He was passionate about his craft, about his convictions and, following his conversion to Catholicism, about his Church.”

The quality that made him a top journalist also turned Novak into a conservative: he never stopped digging for the truth. He was still a liberal Republican in 1963, when Rowland Evans of the *New York Herald Tribune* hired him to co-write a political column—one that would continue for 45 years. A year later, he wrote that the Draft Goldwater Committee employed “concepts and language so harsh that they were unfit for the day-to-day operations or dialogue of American politics.”

But Novak kept probing. In 1972, he broke the story of an unnamed Democratic senator saying of his party’s presidential nominee, “The people don’t know McGovern is for amnesty, abortion and legalization of pot,” a formula later simplified to the triple-A: “acid, amnesty, and abortion.”

Novak moved right in the 1970s and ’80s, becoming a supply-sider and, in 1998, he converted to Catholicism. But still, when truth clashed with his political team, he did what was right—opposing the Iraq War and indicting U.S. foreign policy for inciting Islamic terrorism. This earned him excommunication from the official conservative movement, in David Frum’s *National Review* cover story, “Unpatriotic Conservatives.”

Frum overreached in attacking Novak; letters poured in to defend the veteran reporter. But he hardly needed defense—Novak’s integrity easily put the lie to the invective of his enemies on the Right and Left alike. ■

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Terror's Tipping Point

While the U.S. focuses on Afghanistan, nuclear-armed Pakistan is the far more critical concern.

By Ed Warner

FOREIGN POLICY magazine calls it the tenth most failed nation in the world. A “dysfunctional state,” concedes Tariq Ali, Pakistani author of *The Duel*. Yet according to U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke, “Pakistan is the most important country in the world.”

In response to crisis, the army—savior and suppressor of the state—rules at the expense of civil institutions. Name a problem and Pakistan probably has it. A fierce insurgency within and across the border (hardly a border) with Afghanistan. A menacing, much larger neighbor to its east, India, with whom it has fought five wars. A nuclear arsenal poorly managed in the past and still susceptible to terrorist infiltration. A secessionist movement in the south complicated by Taliban operations. A shattered economy and spreading Islamism. A monster of its own creation, Inter-Services Intelligence, that maneuvers in the shadows on behalf of the state but also its enemies. The world's most wanted man comfortably holding court. And finally, a superpower that supplies military and economic aid but has promised to bomb the fragile state back to the Stone Age if it doesn't cooperate in a mission that angers its own population.

In many ways, Pakistan is a nation prey to forces beyond its control, perhaps too much to ask of any state. And this one happens to be the world's sixth largest, with a population of 169 million. No wonder rumors of imminent collapse regularly circulate: the Taliban will take over and Osama bin Laden will

have his own nuclear weapon. But that hasn't happened. Pakistan lives.

Zafar Syed, webmaster of Voice of America's Urdu service, tells me, “I don't believe in most of the doomsday theories. Pashtuns [Pakistan's largest ethnic community] are overwhelmingly pro-Pakistan. Corrupt politicians, suicide bombers in the mosques, massive electricity failure, and the threat of your cell phone being snatched in the street are one thing, but the possibility of the country breaking apart is quite another.”

He says, without overdoing it, that there are positive signs. A free, very vocal media keeps people informed and politicians on their toes. To almost everyone's surprise, the legal profession rose up against Gen. Pervez Musharraf's 2007 attempt to remove the chief justice of the supreme court, and he backed down. The Pakistani military is too large and too immersed in civilian life to be removed from power, but its wings have been clipped by a nascent move toward democracy.

Mohammed Hanif, a Pakistani journalist who moved back from London a year ago, expected the worst. On arrival at the Karachi airport, his 11-year-old son Channan saw some Americans and whispered furiously, “What are they doing here? Don't they know it's not a tourist country? They always say it's a terrorist country.”

But Hanif writes hopefully in the *Guardian*, “All the news about Pakistan's imminent demise is premature. It

has its civil wars. It has doomsday visionaries who like to send poor kids to blow themselves up and kill other poor people. But if its peasants and workers shared the doomsday vision, they wouldn't be marching up and down the country demanding better wages and working conditions. Over the past two years, hundreds of thousands of citizens have also participated in the largest peaceful political movement in South Asia in recent history and brought down the most well entrenched military dictator in the world.” He refers to President Musharraf, who was forced out of office in 2008.

Swat, a picturesque area in northwest Pakistan known as “the Switzerland of Asia,” may give cause for hope. Six months ago, it was taken over by Taliban who promptly set up their own style of government: women in burkas or at home, schools burned or shut down, malefactors flogged or executed. The beginning of the end, some said. And indeed, the Pakistani army made two failed attempts to recover Swat.

Then it got down to business. In July, 40,000 troops routed the Taliban and pursued them to their mountain fastnesses. In the past, the Taliban have tended to withdraw from superior forces, bide their time, and then terrorize their way back to power. This time, the army vows that the terrorists will not return. It's their test.

Pakistanis got further good news recently when a missile fired by a U.S. drone killed Baitullah Mehsud, leader of

the local Taliban, who was responsible for many terrorist attacks, including, it's believed, the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. His death apparently threw the insurgency into disarray: in what seemed to be a fight to succeed him, one of his top aides was killed. This was a good day for Pakistan, says Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, but not a decisive day: "Getting rid of one or two people is not transformational."

The next challenge for the reinvigorated Pakistani army is mountainous FATA, the misnamed Federally Administered Tribal Areas, which are hardly administered by the central government at all. "This will be a real test of Pakistan's intentions," says Marvin Weinbaum, a former South Asia analyst for the State Department. "Is it a threat to be contained or something to be eliminated?"

The tribal heads are hostile to outsiders, but couldn't repel the Taliban, who killed their way in. Some 200 local leaders have been murdered and more are threatened. They know their time has come when they receive a needle with a long thread intended to sew a shroud.

FATA, the supposed home to Osama bin Laden, is "a multilayered terrorist cake, the world's terrorism central," writes Ahmed Rashid, author of *Descent Into Chaos*. Ingredients include militants from Central Asia, Chechnya, Africa, China, and Kashmir, as well as a cadre of Arabs who form a protective ring around the terror chief. In January 2008, 12 Pakistanis and two Indians were arrested in Barcelona for planning a wave of suicide attacks in European cities. Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón warned, "In my opinion the jihadi threat from Pakistan is the biggest emerging threat we are facing in Europe. Pakistan is an ideological training hotbed for jihadists, and they are being exported here."

With this kind of company, a few tribal leaders have taken the unusual

step of leaving FATA to seek help in Washington, reports UPI editor Arnaud de Borchgrave. When he met with them, they were on their cell phones every few minutes to make sure their families were safe back home. The double-mindedness doesn't surprise: they're turning to one outsider to repel another.

This kind of ambiguity has long characterized the relationship between Pakistan and the United States. Each can push only so far, and the situation is too complicated to give outright orders—which may or may not be obeyed anyway.

THE TALIBAN ARE, AFTER ALL, A PAKISTANI CREATION. TO RESTORE ORDER TO AFGHANISTAN, ENGULFED IN CIVIL WAR AFTER THE SOVIET DEPARTURE, PAKISTAN SENT A WAVE OF PROMISING STUDENTS, TALIBAN, FROM ITS MADRASSAS.

The Taliban are, after all, a Pakistani creation. To restore order to Afghanistan, engulfed in civil war after the Soviet departure, Pakistan sent a wave of promising students, *taliban*, from its madrassas. They succeeded beyond all expectations by taking over Afghanistan and imposing their harsh rule. They also furnished defense for Pakistan in case of difficulties with India in the contested Kashmir.

In his recent book, *To Live or To Perish Forever*, an account of two years in Pakistan, Nicholas Schmidle writes that at first he couldn't understand how the Taliban could operate so freely in Pakistan: "Where were they getting support? The more I looked around, the more I realized that everyone, everywhere in Pakistan seemed to be offering help." The pious servants of Allah deserve refuge, reason Pakistanis, since they are making trouble for the intrusive Americans.

Is the parent to turn on the child, even under U.S. pressure? Practicing statecraft worthy of Machiavelli, Musharraf

offered some advice to Hugo Chavez, the America-baiting president of Venezuela: "You are far too aggressive with the Americans. Do as I do. Accept what they say, and then do as you want." Pakistanis have cause for caution because U.S. forces had no sooner arrived than they went off to an inexplicable war in Iraq. Pakistanis felt deserted.

According to Barry Newhouse, VOA's Islamabad bureau chief for two years, there is also a financial element—an incentive to do just enough fighting to

ensure continued U.S. aid. "Significant segments of the Pakistani population see the back and forth between the Taliban and the Pakistani army as orchestrated in part to get more dollars out of the United States," he says. "The army keeps things at a steady boil in the northwest, the thinking goes, and just lets that aid money continue to roll in." Who knows how long the United States will be around? Best to get while the getting is good.

Pakistanis remain puzzled about American plans. They don't see an end game. Akbar Ahmed, chair of Islamic Studies at American University, asks, "What is the long term objective of western troops in Afghanistan? What is the strategy to attain these objectives and please share them with us. A lot of us are plainly baffled as to what is going to be the picture in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Finding Osama bin Laden seems like an obvious objective. But in nearly eight years of war, the U.S. has failed to capture him, giving rise to no end of conspiracy theories. Do we really want to

catch him? Writes Ahmed Rashid, "None of the intelligence agencies seemed to be capable of carrying out the simplest of procedures, such as intercepting the couriers who delivered the dozens of video and audio tapes sent by al-Qaeda to be aired on al-Jazeera. No courier was ever arrested."

Meanwhile, the Taliban leader and bin Laden's former host, Mullah Omar, remains ensconced in Baluchistan, a large province of southern Pakistan. Though Baluchs constitute just 2 percent of Pakistan's population, they have made continuous trouble and occa-

than optimal solution," a State Department official says, "and this is just one more element of that."

Besides, the more Americans get involved in Pakistan, the more they seem to be resented. Since locals are not sure what the U.S. is doing, they suspect the worst. Zafar Syed says there are even suspicions that the United States wants to destabilize Pakistan and seize its nuclear weapons. More visibly, Pakistanis are infuriated by U.S. drone attacks. Many civilians have been killed by a system that seems too coldly efficient. The man at the controls sits in an

launched a nuclear-powered submarine. The *Times of India* reports that the country is developing the third leg of its nuclear triad—the ability to fire nukes undetected below the sea as well as from land and air.

Israel also looks warily at Pakistan. Even as it augments its own nuclear arsenal, it continues to denounce regional rivals. Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman has identified a new axis of evil: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Former Indian prime minister Indira Ghandi told Tariq Ali that Israel once proposed a strike on Pakistan's nuclear arsenal using an Indian airfield. Ghandi refused, but added that if it became necessary, India would strike.

By any account, Pakistan has behaved casually, indeed irresponsibly, with its nuclear arsenal. A.Q. Khan, the father of the Pakistani bomb, engaged in the biggest proliferation up to the present. He believed in safety in numbers—the more Third World countries that have nuclear weapons, the less pressure on Pakistan to disarm.

More ominously, nuclear scientist Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood met with Osama bin Laden a month before the 9/11 attacks. There's no doubt that they discussed nuclear weapons, which bin Laden desperately wanted. Did he have a chance of getting them? U.S. officials have concluded, somewhat hesitantly, that he did not. Pakistanis, meanwhile, scoffed that men in caves can hardly deliver a nuclear blow.

But according to a report in a journal published by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, terrorists have attacked three of Pakistan's nuclear facilities in the last two years. It cites a suicide attack on a main nuclear-weapons assembly plant not far from Islamabad. Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell says the Defense Department is not aware of any such attacks and remains comfortable with nuclear security in Pakistan.

ASKED IN A GALLUP POLL WHAT THEY **CONSIDER THE GREATEST DANGER**, 11 PERCENT OF PAKISTANI RESPONDENTS SAID **THE TALIBAN**, 18 PERCENT CITED INDIA, AND **59 PERCENT SAID THE UNITED STATES**.

sional war with the government. Beneath "the land of sand" in which they live lie vast untapped reserves of oil, gas, and uranium. That makes them popular with a variety of suitors, including China, which is financing an extensive port development at Gwadar on the Indian Ocean. Besides dredging the harbor and building two berths, Beijing has also sent 600 engineers. The Pentagon's Office of Future Studies says that by establishing a listening post and Indian Ocean naval presence, China may use its power to project force and undermine U.S. and regional security. Is a new Cold War in the offing? Nothing like dreaming up future problems when you can't handle current ones.

Baluchistan also serves as a corridor for the worldwide delivery of opium, refined into heroin, which provides the Taliban with \$60-80 million a year. But American officials say there is only so much they can do. U.S. troops are busy up north. "So much of our strategy in Pakistan has been settling for the less

air-conditioned office many miles, maybe a continent, away—not exactly a heroic clash. Asked in a Gallup poll what they consider the greatest danger, 11 percent of Pakistani respondents said the Taliban, 18 percent cited India, and 59 percent said the United States. Sixty-seven percent said they oppose U.S. military operations on Pakistani soil.

But as long as the Afghan War persists, Pakistan will be in play as Pashtuns, particularly Taliban, flee U.S. troops across the blurry border. And the questionable security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal radically raises the stakes. Harvard professor Graham Allison, a member of the U.S. bipartisan commission on WMD and nuclear proliferation, says, "When you map WMD and terrorism, all roads intersect in Pakistan."

The only Muslim country in possession of nuclear weapons, Pakistan continues its buildup, testing ballistic and cruise missiles and constructing two new reactors to make plutonium. In this gathering arms race, India has just

Among the 70,000 people working in an expanding nuclear complex evil intent may lurk, and the close ties between members of Pakistan's ISI and the Taliban cannot be discounted. But it's extremely difficult to assemble a nuclear weapon from dispersed parts, and there's the matter of military savvy. A nuclear mishap would redound on the army, says Newhouse. It would be blamed and duly punished, and "The army just have too much to lose from that."

If the war with the Taliban ends, nuclear weapons will be less of a worry. And from almost any point of view, the conflict has reached a stalemate. The United States is adding troops, but the insurgents continue to make gains as they cross the Pakistan-Afghanistan border hastily created by the British in 1893. The so-called Durand line meanders over mountains, through towns and even private homes. The natives know the terrain.

Thus the key lies not in defeating all comers but in refining our objective. Robert Baer, a former CIA field officer in the Middle East and author of *The Devil We Know*, warns that we must never forget that al-Qaeda attacked us, not the Taliban, which is not an international terrorist group. "If we make the all-too-common mistake of reducing the Taliban to al-Qaeda," he says, "it becomes an open-ended and endless war." With that in mind, possibilities for negotiation open. Can the insurgency be broken up?

One key player has suggested that. He is not to everyone's liking. Indeed, his fierce, unyielding temperament is hardly to anyone's liking. Yet Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, now a resident of Pakistan, could play a pivotal role. He was perhaps the most effective commander in the Afghan war against the Soviets. With their defeat, he got involved in the destructive civil war in Afghanistan and when the Taliban arrived, he fled to Iran. Hekmatyar later joined the Taliban in confronting the U.S. invasion, but it's

said to be an uneasy relationship. He is more opportunistic and less *sharia*-bound, favoring free elections and jobs and education for women. The Saudis have been in contact with him behind the scenes. The Americans may have been, too. One possibility is to give him asylum in Saudi Arabia for a period of time, then let him return to public life in Afghanistan with a pardon. On Aug. 17, he issued a statement in which he promised that his Hizb-e-Islami militants would "help the United States and other coalition forces if foreign troops announce the time frame for pulling their troops out of Afghanistan."

What does the postwar future hold for Pakistan? Despite the gloom of some, it is not likely to disintegrate, though it does seem to be headed in an Islamist direction, partly as a trend of the times, partly in reaction to the horrors of war. What comes first, flag or faith? The willingness to subordinate state to God goes against the founding of Pakistan, which was intended to be a secular Muslim state. Now that idea has been overturned by the dogma of Islamic universalism. "At every turn," write Rakesh Mani and Zehra Ahmed, "Pakistanis seem more likely to unite as brothers in Islam than as sons of the same soil." And on that soil, they shed one another's blood.

This state of affairs owes much to the Saudis' well-financed promotion of Wahhabism, the austere, confining version of Islam that made converts of the Taliban. But don't take undue alarm, says Mohammed Hanif, the journalist who recently returned to Pakistan. At first, he was dismayed to see all the women in burkas, even on the beach. But then he took a closer look: "Many of them were on a date. Some were actually making out in broad daylight with men with beards. Covered from head to toe in a black robe, this is quite a spectacle." The real spirit of Karachi, he says, has not been broken.

There are moderate variants of Islam alive in Pakistan, William Dalrymple writes. While the northwest tends to Wahhabism, in the southern province of Sindh the predominant religion is Sufism, which emphasizes human brotherhood and tolerance. "All these mullahs should be damned," an old Sufi complained to Dalrymple. "They read their books, but they never understood the true message of love that the Prophet preached." Can Sufism be the future of Pakistan? It is at least a possibility for a country that has explored so many possibilities in search of national well-being.

This isn't quite the democratic dawn the United States has in mind for the Mideast. But wars do not always end as anticipated—a reason for caution about military intervention overseas, as the acute diplomat-historian George Kennan made clear: "You might start in on a war with certain things on your mind as a purpose of what you are doing, but in the end you found yourself fighting for entirely different things that you never thought of before. In other words, war has a momentum of its own, and it carries you away from all thoughtful intentions when you get in into it."

Let's be realistic, says Afghan UN Representative Lakhdar Brahimi. Our ambitions tend to exceed our abilities: "We seek to promote justice, national reconciliation, human rights, gender equality and democracy, all at the same time, immediately, from day one even in the midst of conflict." Reducing those goals to simple stability—likely served by our distance more than our presence—may be the best hope for this tangled, tragic, "most important country in the world." ■

Ed Warner is a former editor-reporter for the Voice of America with a special interest in Afghanistan-Pakistan.

Dr. Doom Runs for Senate

Perpetual bear Peter Schiff contemplates a move into politics.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

PETER SCHIFF is offended. “Nobody has ever contacted me from any of the congressmen to say, ‘Hey, you saw this financial collapse coming, you nailed it exactly,’” he says, adding impatiently, “I pretty much got it exact.”

If nobody from Washington wants to call him, Schiff figures, he will call Washington. “I don’t seem to be able to make a difference as a private citizen. No one there seems to care what I say,” he complains. He plans to make them care by challenging Sen. Chris Dodd in 2010. “People say things can’t be changed in there,” he says. “If they’re right, then the country is finished.”

Schiff is president and chief global strategist of Euro Pacific Capital, a brokerage firm in Westport, Connecticut, one of the richest towns in the richest county in America. Over the past five years, he has achieved notoriety as a talking head on financial news outlets like CNBC and Fox Business. TV bookers began to like him for his contrarian views on the economy. He was “Dr. Doom,” a “perma-bear,” a “doomsayer.” He served as a punching bag for the pin-striped optimists telling us to buy, buy, borrow, then buy some more.

Now he is offended because he was right. After Bear Stearns collapsed and AIG had to be rescued shivering in a financial alleyway, a video emerged on YouTube entitled “Peter Schiff Was Right,” compiling clips of his predictions of financial disaster and the dim-witted hosts who laughed at him. The video

was broadcast on “The Daily Show,” making him a minor Internet celebrity.

According to Schiff’s own estimates, however, his bookings are down 75 percent. The financial networks lost ratings as the gloom settled on them, and now they are filling the airwaves with talk of impending recovery. But where Art Laffer and Larry Kudlow see “green shoots,” Schiff finds rot. He believes that the bad times are going to get much worse: “This was just a financial crisis, a symptom of the economic crisis to come.”

In his 2006 book, *Crash Proof: How to Profit From the Coming Economic Collapse*, Schiff compares the world economy to an island on which five Asians and one American have been stranded. The castaways get hungry and devise a system in which the Asians divide up the work of hunting, farming, cooking, preparing, and serving the food, while the American is assigned the job of eating. “Modern-day economists,” Schiff writes, “would have you look at the situation just described and believe that the American is the lone engine of growth driving the island’s economy, that without the American ... the Asians on the island would be all unemployed.” In the real world, Schiff speculates, the only reason Asians have not voted Americans off their economic island is the stubbornness of Asian central banks that continue to accept America’s dollars, or as Schiff calls them, “worthless IOU’s.”

He predicts that Asia will decouple

itself from the debt-ridden caboose that is the American economy and turn its savings into domestic consumption. That process will leave America in a heap while Asians play with their new toys. The financial strategy of Euro Pac is designed to protect Schiff’s clients when the dollar drops to zero. He does not welcome America’s collapse, but he will be ready. He’s been preparing for his whole life.

Schiff’s parents divorced when he was young. He and his brother Andrew often moved as their mother changed jobs, from Connecticut to Manhattan, then to Florida and southern California. But their father, Irwin, still exercised considerable influence on his boys, particularly when it came to understanding economics.

Irwin Schiff was born into a large, middle-class, Roosevelt-loving Jewish family. His father immigrated to the United States after living in Russia and Poland at the turn of the century. “He came here with nothing,” Peter says. Irwin’s father made a living as a carpenter, and Irwin attended the University of Connecticut, earning a B.A. in accounting and economics. The brothers still don’t know when and how their father became so ardent a follower of the Austrian school of economics, a free-market philosophy that detests central banks and wants to see a return to a gold-backed dollar. “We know where we got our economics,” Andrew says, “But we can’t explain how our father came to it.”

Irwin threw himself into the 1960 Goldwater campaign in Connecticut and became well known among Austrian economists in America. His attempt to impart that school to his two young sons turned into books like *How An Economy Grows and Why It Doesn't*, an introductory economics lesson in the form of a comic book, which is now available online.

In 1974, Irwin Schiff moved from merely criticizing government intervention in the economy to actively resisting it. He scratched out "U.S. Individual Tax Return" from the top of his 1040 form and replaced it with the words "U.S. Individual Income Confession," then wrote in various assertions that the income tax was unconstitutional. Irwin's attempt to

Schiff graduated from UC Berkeley in 1987 with a degree in finance and accounting and began working at Shearson Lehman Brothers. "I could see the clients were getting ripped off," he says. "We were pushing a lot of crap on them. I wasn't, but most were." The firm was unloading shares of stocks they were paid to sell, a conflict of interest, he says, "and the client came out on the short end."

Schiff decided to leave Shearson. He stayed at his dad's apartment in New York as Irwin left for yet another prison sentence, took over fulfilling orders for his father's books, and spent a few months in Europe to clear his head. Then he returned to California, where he still had his license, and worked for a

seems to be foreordained by Connecticut's Republican establishment as their next moderate loser, and Tom Foley, a Bush-appointed ambassador to Ireland.

Unfortunately for Schiff, his following is dispersed nationwide among Austrian economists and the kind of young people energized by Ron Paul's presidential bid. He is virtually unknown among the Republican Party in Connecticut.

"What I have to do is say to them, 'Why are you Republicans? What do you believe in? Do you believe in big government, just not quite as big?'" he says. To Schiff, it's obvious that Simmons, who voted for the Patriot Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, does not meet the standard. "Republicans are so easy to corrupt when they get in power because they want to stay there," he says. "I don't. I can make more money here."

In addition to his imprisoned father and radical ideas, Schiff has another electoral hurdle: his likeability—or lack thereof. The certainty of his pessimism can be unnerving. During the housing boom, "people wouldn't even want me around," he admits, "I would have a hard time keeping quiet about things. I would try to tell them that what they were doing was wrong."

He still cannot keep his mouth shut. When I met him at his mostly unfurnished mansion in Connecticut—he rents—he was mocking Hank Paulson's televised testimony about Bank of America before the House Oversight Committee: "You buy Merrill Lynch and you go bankrupt and we'll help you. That's what he's saying!"

Asked about his living arrangements, Schiff smirked, "My landlord's barely getting 1 percent over the mortgage on the rent. If he has to do any repairs, he'll be underwater." If he comes off as a know-it-all, it's because everything that has happened in the past two years has proved to him that he knows it all.

IN ADDITION TO HIS IMPRISONED FATHER AND **RADICAL IDEAS**, SCHIFF
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prove to the United States government that its main source of revenue was illegitimate and immoral earned him a conviction for tax evasion in 1978. He was jailed for the first time in 1980. But that didn't deter him. In the 29 years since, Irwin has spent nearly 9 years in jail and is currently serving a 13-year sentence at the Terre Haute Federal Correctional Complex. He is set to be released in 2016, when he will be 88.

Though neither of his sons will discuss the emotional toll this has taken on their family, by 1980, Peter had begun urging his father to cease what he saw as futile resistance. He admits today that he finds Irwin's intellectual case compelling, but is completely disinclined to imitate his father's radical methods or his idealism. "The problem with my father is that he's not practical," Peter says coldly. "He was always going to lose."

small firm with another broker, Mark Anderson. The two spent days and nights cold-calling prospective clients.

As the '90s edged toward a tech-stock bubble, Schiff became bearish on America and began moving his wealth offshore. He found ways to make buys directly on foreign exchanges and bought property trusts, utilities, and resource companies—"stuff no one was interested in." Meanwhile, he began warning clients and friends to sell their tech stocks before the NASDAQ came crashing down to earth. He gained credibility from that collapse and with it new business. Today, Euro Pacific has over 15,000 clients and about \$1.5 billion under management.

Schiff's prospective Senate run is still in the exploratory phase. Before he can take on Chris Dodd, he has to beat Rob Simmons, a former congressman who

Schiff slouches deeply in his couch. He is an isolated man. He is a specialist in a service industry who denounces reliance on a service economy. He likes being booked for television, but looks down on his fellow panelists as propagandists and morons. Divorced and graying at 46, he is occasionally visited by his son or his girlfriend from New York City. He is a non-practicing Jew, with little apparent interest in religion. *The Israel Lobby*, the much discussed book describing the distorting effects of pro-Israel sentiment on American foreign policy, sits on one of his shelves along with other books about Judaism. None look like they've ever been read.

Andrew Schiff, who is managing the press for the exploratory campaign, says his first task is to humanize his brother. "What gets you elected is people have to

only trying to do it because if I don't do it, who's going to do it? If somebody doesn't do it, the country is screwed." This is a counterintuitive campaign pitch to say the least.

What difference can one man make? Schiff isn't sure, but he wants to find out. "Maybe some of these politicians are not evil. Maybe they care a little bit about the country. As more and more of my predictions have come true—of course they are all going to come true, there's nothing I'm saying that's not going to happen—at some point the politicians will actually respond." Schiff for Senate is like an experiment: let's see what happens if you bring a hard-headed hard-money advocate to the upper chamber.

So far, Schiff's fans are responding. On Aug. 7, he received over \$350,000 in a Ron Paul-style money bomb, which

another about the culture war. Immigration is irrelevant to him because he believes that the Fed's policies, if left unchanged, will cause Americans to abandon the country *en masse*. When asked about foreign policy, he says, "We won't be able to afford a foreign policy." Fine, but does he have thoughts on the justice of the Iraq War? "Sure," he says, without revealing them, "but the point is we can't afford it."

His followers see him as a prophet, yet a prophet's role is not merely to predict disasters and watch them unfold. A prophet calls his people back to the truths they've abandoned.

For Schiff, the entire financial world is a lie piled on top of a lie—from the brokerage houses that advise clients to buy the stocks the institution is paid to sell, to the banks that loan out many times more money than they collect in deposits, to the Fed that is supposed to discipline market actors but bails them out instead. The greatest falsehood of all is the dollar itself, a piece of paper redeemable in nothing. We no longer know the value of things or can predict our ability to pay, and this, Schiff says, will bring us to ruin. If civilization is the ability to make promises and keep them, then the Fed is making this commercial Republic uncivilized.

America may be living in apocalyptic times, but the thing about prophets is that they tend to be passed over for the Rob Simmonses of the world—the guy who knows about fishing lures, who tells us that things are turning the corner and we can rest easy.

"They will have never seen anyone like me before," Schiff says of his potential Senate colleagues. The truth is they never want to see Schiff in the first place. ■

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REPUBLICANS IN CONNECTICUT ARE SO **DESPERATE FOR NEW IDEAS** AND CREDIBILITY, **SO SHELL-SHOCKED** BY THE COLLAPSING FINANCIAL BUBBLE, THAT THEY **MAY JUST PIN THEIR ELECTORAL HOPES ON SCHIFF**

get a sense of you and like you. Peter is not great one-on-one. He's not a guy who spends a lot of time talking about the best fishing lures to use."

The crazy part is that Peter Schiff has a chance at all. Republicans in Connecticut are so desperate for new ideas and credibility, so shell-shocked by the collapsing financial bubble, that they may just pin their electoral hopes on Schiff. Who cares if he's a doomsayer who believes the worst times are ahead, that he lives like a hermit in an empty rented mansion and can't stop scolding people? He was right when the whole world was wrong. No one likes the guy who tells hard truths—until they hit rock bottom. The GOP is just about there.

"I don't want to do this. I don't want to go to the Senate," Schiff insists. "I'm

gives him more cash on hand than Rob Simmons. His ability to self-finance and to bring out-of-state donors will surely attract attention from a weakened GOP. The *Hartford Courant* has profiled him. And his clairvoyance on the housing crisis contrasts favorably with Chris Dodd's complicity with disgraced mortgage lender Countrywide. Republicans have been looking for a different kind of candidate who can win in the Northeast. In Schiff, that's exactly what they have, whether they like it or not.

He is a new thing on the scene: a conservative declinist who ignores culture and demographics. To Schiff, issues besides the economy are ancillary—or really just economic issues in disguise. He is pro-choice and generally pro-gay, but he doesn't seem to care one way or

The Right Fights Back

WHAT HAPPENED to the Age of Obama?

Glancing over the *New York Times Book Review*, one finds three of the top four nonfiction bestsellers were written by conservatives—columnist Michelle Malkin, talk-show host Mark Levin, and Fox News contributor Dick Morris.

At No. 10, in its 40th week on the list, is Bill O'Reilly's memoir. The No. 1 best-seller in paperback: Glenn Beck's *Common Sense*.

Moreover, the altarpiece of the transformational presidency, universal health insurance, is on life support, as huge crowds pour into townhall meetings to denounce it. Responding to the protests, the Obamaites have dumped the end-of-life counselors (aka "death panels") and declared the government option expendable.

But what are we to make of these "evil-mongers" of Harry Reid's depiction, these "mobs" of "thugs" organized by K Street lobbyists and "right-wing extremists"? Surely, all Americans must detest them.

To the contrary. According to a Pew poll, by 61 percent to 34 percent, Americans think the protesters are behaving properly. Gallup found that by 34 percent to 21 percent Americans identify with them. For these folks at the townhall meetings are not overprivileged Ivy League brats seizing campus buildings and holding the dean hostage. They look and talk just like them.

What President Obama is losing is not the far Right but the center of the country. Nor is this the first time liberals have misread America.

During the 1968 Democratic Convention, liberals sided with the antiwar demonstrators in Grant Park. And the country sided with the Chicago cops who went into the park and gave them a good thrashing.

In 1969, the national press was writing that President Nixon must yield to the hundreds of thousands ringing the White House. Nixon went on national TV to call on the Silent Majority to stand by him.

They did, for four years. One recalls Sen. Ed Muskie blurting out, after being crushed in the Florida primary by George Wallace, that he didn't know there were that many racists in Florida. That was the end of Ed. And in the fall, the Floridians flooded to Nixon, who did not insult them.

After Nixon rolled up his 49-state triumph, Pauline Kael, movie critic at the *New Yorker*, is said to have expressed disbelief: "I don't know how Nixon won. No one I know voted for him."

George H.W. Bush never saw the rebellion of 1992 coming and watched Ross Perot waltz off with a third of his 1988 voters.

The anger in Middle America today looks much like what erupted in the NAFTA debate of 1993 and the amnesty debate of 2007.

The difference: Republican leaders stood with Washington then, for NAFTA and amnesty. This time, the party leaders are with the people and should do the people's will.

Seven months into the Age of Obama, the GOP has been given an opportunity to regain the allegiance of the voters John McCain lost with his embrace of NAFTA and amnesty and his dash to Washington to convince Republicans to give Hank Paulson \$700 billion to bail out Wall Street.

For these protesters are not so much being drawn to the GOP as being driven to it. The manic assaults by Democrats and liberal commentators and columnists on the protesters as "un-American," "birthers," "racists," "mobs," and

"evil-mongers" has enraged and united them and cost Obama much of his support in Middle America

Does the Left not realize that, while four in five Republicans say the protesters are behaving appropriately, 64 percent of moderates and 40 percent of Democrats agree with those Republicans?

We are also learning that Republicans have not been hurt by their opposition to the stimulus bill or cap-and-trade. The country has come to agree with the GOP.

Nor was the party hurt when, by four to one, its senators voted against Ms. Affirmative Action, Sonia Sotomayor. Nor was it hurt by standing with Sgt. Crowley when Obama rushed to denounce the Cambridge cop for acting "stupidly" in arresting the Harvard professor who got in his face.

Increasingly, Obama is being perceived as a man of the Left and Republicans as the bulwark against a lurch to the left. Democrats may denounce Republicans as the party of "no"—but the nation seems to be saying "yes" to the party of "no"

In his new memoir, *Encounters*, conservative scholar Dr. Paul Gottfried writes of a 1993 gathering, hosted by this writer, where libertarian legend Murray Rothbard, columnist Sam Francis, and that founding father of postwar conservatism, Dr. Russell Kirk, went at it over the role of the populist Right in the conservative movement.

Though they vehemently disagreed, each man represented an essential element of a center-right coalition. As for the protesters, surely Thomas Jefferson was more right than Harry Reid when he wrote to James Madison, "A little rebellion now and then is a good thing and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical." ■

Burn Victims

Toxic exposure torments soldiers long after their tours end.

By Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

RETIRED SGT. Michael Maynard can no longer feel his feet. He began to notice the problem four years ago while working as an air-traffic control specialist in the Army. After a year at Camp Taji in Iraq, Maynard took off his boots one night and found that a hot piece of metal had slipped inside—hot enough to tear away his skin. Somehow he hadn't felt it.

By the time another year had passed, Maynard was back home in Indiana, confined to a wheelchair. Today, at age 49, he needs heavy braces to help him stand.

"With his muscles degenerating ... he keeps falling," his wife Maria says. "He's a mess. I am constantly worried about him."

Department of Veterans Affairs doctors were flummoxed by his condition, finally diagnosing rheumatoid fibromyalgia. But Maynard's own neurologist believes his condition is the result of nerve damage caused by toxic exposure.

He is not alone. Michael Maynard is one among thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of veterans suffering from what growing anecdotal and scientific evidence indicates is chronic illness due to inhaling poisonous emissions from the massive burn pits at Army installations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Department of Defense is having a hard time managing this story, which echoes the infamous Vietnam-era Agent Orange scandal and Gulf War Syndrome. (There still has been no official admission that symptoms of the latter are service-related.)

The Pentagon insists that burn pits pose no long-term health risks. But this summer, an Army research article surfaced that suggests otherwise, and individual physicians are now saying that the type of heart and lung damage they see among returning soldiers can only be explained by prolonged exposure to toxic emissions. One soldier stationed in Hawaii was told by Army doctors that his cystic lung disease and shrinking abdominal aorta were probably related to his burn-pit exposure at Camp Speicher in Iraq. He is believed to be the first to have the link officially documented.

As of 2008, of the nearly 500,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who had sought healthcare through the Veterans Administration since the war on terror began, 20 percent had respiratory diseases, 36 percent suffered diseases of the nervous system, 17 percent reported circulatory illness, and 42 percent exhibited "symptoms, signs and ill-defined conditions." Outwardly, the Army has been cool in its response; behind the scenes it is struggling to get ahead of these damaging reports, according to sources who spoke to *TAC* on the condition of anonymity.

But you don't have to tell Michael Maynard what to think about the noxious black cloud that used to hover over Taji's airfield. "The smoke got so bad sometimes that we had to reroute traffic or close down traffic," he says. At times, "our lungs and our throats were just burning and it felt like something was crawling all over our skin. ... Frankly, I

don't think anyone had any clue about what they were dumping in there."

As more stories like Maynard's emerge, perhaps the better question is what wasn't thrown into those yawning open-air trash heaps? The massive fires reportedly burned hazardous waste (including, by some accounts, amputated limbs and used hypodermic needles), hardware, Styrofoam, lithium batteries, rubber, dining-hall refuse, petroleum products, pressure-treated wood, plastics, animal carcasses, latrine waste, aluminum cans, and unexploded ordnance. Maynard points out that pre-invasion, Taji was a chemical-weapons plant and munitions and tank-maintenance facility. There was a lot of "cleaning up" when the 1st Cavalry Division took over in April 2004. Everything was "must go."

"I was told the pit was safe, but we all joked we would wind up with cancer," retired U.S. Air Force Sgt. Jon Vance wrote recently in the growing ad hoc registry at the Burn Pits Action Center (www.BurnPits.org). In 2005, he was stationed at Balad Air Base, which at its peak was burning up to 250 tons of waste a day.

"I saw furniture, computers, trucks, etc. being burned. I believe they burned some really nasty stuff in that pit," Vance says. He now suffers from "a continuous dry cough along with pain in every joint, headaches, diminished lung capacity, memory loss, and a constant metallic taste in my mouth."

Army Sgt. Michael Moore, 30, tells *TAC* he recently had facial and reconstructive airway surgery to correct sleep

apnea. He still wakes up violently every night gasping for breath and fears that one night he won't wake up at all. The Georgia resident recalls "all kinds of crazy stuff" being tossed into the pit at Balad, a base that can house some 30,000 personnel at any one time. He served there from 2005-06. "We asked them about it, and they said it was only trash they burned."

Disabled American Veterans has so far collected more than 400 stories from veterans, most of whom suffer from respiratory illnesses, a smaller fraction from cancer.

Patrick Campbell, who served in Iraq as an Army National Guard medic, now advances policy on Capitol Hill for the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. While sprawling bases like Balad have since acquired new incinerators to reduce the smoke, he said that pits are still operating freely at other installations, "burning a lot of stuff that shouldn't be burned."

THEY FOUND THAT DIOXINS (HAZARDOUS TOXIC CHEMICALS) WERE AT 51 TIMES ACCEPTABLE LEVELS, EXPOSURE TO PARTICULATE MATTER AT 50 TIMES ACCEPTABLE LEVELS.

Meanwhile, Pentagon officials are trying to stave off a potential public-relations nightmare and, worse, a force-wide health disaster. Added to the other healthcare issues facing the more than 950,000 (and counting) returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, the total long-term cost of the two wars could be as high as \$3 trillion, economists Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Blimes predicted in 2008.

"To me, personally, [the resistance] is about the money, it's about paying those sick soldiers," says Moore. Besides the sleep apnea, he has the breathing capacity of an old man and "abnormal" scarring on his lungs.

An Air Force study of the Balad pit conducted in 2006 by Lt. Col. Darrin L. Curtis, who said one of his research mates called it "the worst environmental site I have ever personally visited," listed a number of possible contaminants at the site based on the trash, including arsenic, benzene (which comes from aircraft fuel and is linked to leukemia), carbon monoxide, cancer-causing sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, and various metals.

Burning garbage in pits is not new; it has long been the only effective way to get rid of waste in a war zone. But as Curtis wrote in 2006, "today's solid waste contains materials that were not present in the past that can create hazardous compounds." Unlike in past wars, the pits today are not quick fixes. They've been burning as long as the wars themselves.

"In my professional opinion there is an acute health hazard for individuals ... also the possibility for chronic health

hazards associated with the smoke," Curtis concluded. "It is amazing that the burn pit has been able to operate without restrictions over the past few years, without significant engineering controls being put into place." Especially since, as Curtis noted, "the burn pit at Balad ... has been identified as a health hazard for several years in numerous after-action reports."

Army Times reporter Kelly Kennedy unearthed the memo in 2008, much to the Army's chagrin. At that time, sick veterans were beginning to ask questions and had started networking online. Kennedy also reported that the Army's

Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (CHPPM) and the Air Force Institute for Operational Health had conducted their own assessments at Balad after the Curtis memo had gone up the chain of the command in 2007. They found that dioxins (hazardous toxic chemicals) were at 51 times acceptable levels, exposure to particulate matter at 50 times acceptable levels.

The military swiftly downplayed the paper, saying that a "software error" had produced erroneous numbers for the dioxins—1,000 times the number they should have been. "The error was corrected, and it has been determined that no significant short- or long-term health risks, and no elevated cancer risks, are likely among personnel deployed to Balad," an Air Force spokeswoman told the magazine in October 2008.

The correction did not include new numbers for particulate matter, tiny bits of dangerous metals and carcinogens suspended in the air. Experts tell *TAC* that this is the untold story: one doesn't necessarily need to be working right on top of the pits to breathe this stuff in. No one knows how many soldiers have been exposed.

Struggling to manage the situation, CHPPM released "Just the Facts," in December 2008, based on air sampling at Balad from 2004-06. It said that while there was an "occasional presence" of dioxins, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and volatile compounds, the health risks were "low due to the infrequent detections of these chemicals." In addition, the paper said, three incinerators were brought in between May 2007 and April 2008, and recycling was introduced, reducing the waste burning by 50 percent.

The raw data has been classified, despite calls from increasingly concerned members of Congress. The study has also been widely criticized for being incomplete, and questions have arisen regarding how the samples were taken

and assessed. Among other complaints, experts say there was no review of the risk from individual contaminants interacting with one another, and the study minimized the levels of particulate matter, which were found to be higher than normal.

But the DoD stands by the research and continues to use the study as its chief reference point. Dr. Craig Postlewaite, director of DoD's force readiness and health assurance, tells *TAC* that while the smoke from these pits could be responsible for "acute" health issues like "general irritation" of the eyes and throat, "when we look at respiratory effects on a population-wide basis, we're not seeing a cause for concern. It is potentially a small number of people who are being affected, but they are not showing up in large numbers in our studies."

Postlewaite adds, "Some people are more susceptible to diseases than other people." He notes that some soldiers have preconditions, like asthma or genetic vulnerabilities, and others smoke cigarettes: "There is no assurance that we are going to be able to tease these things apart." In the meantime, 27 incinerators have been installed, he said. "We are strongly committed to protecting our personnel."

He stands by the 2008 DoD review and calls Kennedy's reporting in the *Army Times* "a little bit jumbled." He says that that her July piece reporting on an Army research article entitled "Potential Health Implications Associated with Particulate Matter Exposure in Deployed Settings in Southwest Asia" misrepresented the research in relation to the burn pits at Balad.

"Open burn pits and simple incinerators with little or no air pollution control devices, used at some locations to process waste in [Iraq and Afghanistan], generate smoke plumes that may pose a considerable health hazard to deployed personnel," lead author Coleen Weese

wrote in the Army report. Postlewaite insists the quote was not specific to the deployed population at Balad, but was a "general" observation about the possible effects of particulate matter.

He says there are ongoing epidemiological assessments that will zero in on where and how the pits were used and who might have been affected, "but right now we really don't have any indication that this is causing harm to people." He cites plans to start following soldiers after they return to monitor degenerative effects, something the DoD does not do now beyond perfunctory post-deployment health screening.

The VA, on the other hand, said that it is currently collecting this sort of data among its patient population, but it has not generated hard statistics about possible burn pit connections—at least not for public consumption. "Without documentation [from DoD], the VA really has nothing to go on," insists Campbell.

Members of Congress are waking up to the issue. "I think there has been some effort to downplay the impact of these burn pits," says Rep. Tim Bishop (D-N.Y.), who this spring introduced the Military Personnel Toxic Exposure Prevention Act, which would limit the use of burn pits, require a full investigation into their effects, and fund surveillance of exposed personnel through an official registry.

Bishop started the Burn Pit Action Center in May and says that the stories astound him. "I would say the biggest revelation is that any reasonable person would consider these burn pits a good idea to begin with," he tells *TAC*. "Clearly they would not be allowed in our own country, there is no way we would dispose of waste like this in any community without violating any state or federal laws."

Reps. Ron Paul (R-Texas) and Ginny Brown-Waite (R-Fla.) crossed party lines to sign on to Bishop's bill, which

had 22 cosponsors as of August. Paul tells *TAC* that as a medical doctor, he has been concerned since Vietnam about soldiers getting sick and the government's apparent lack of urgency. "When our government calls us we go and don't ask questions. Then [soldiers] come home and that's when it gets more complicated," he says.

As of August, 150 veterans in 21 states were suing major defense contractor Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) for mismanaging the burn pits. "I had been inundated by calls from soldiers about the burn pits," said attorney Elizabeth Burke of the law firm Burke O'Neill, which is handling the case. "The black smoke was coming in through the air conditioners, and helicopters couldn't take off because of the cloud. We knew KBR had the LOGCAP (Logistics Civil Augmentation Program) contract ... to operate the waste management in a safe and effective manner and to minimize the smoke inhalation on the bases, and they failed to do that." She contends that KBR didn't get the incinerators up and running in time and cut corners "out of greed." Her first plaintiff, Joshua Eller, claims that he saw wild dogs running in and out of the pits dragging out human body parts.

For its part, KBR flatly denies any "general assertion that KBR knowingly harmed troops" and avowed that "any burn pit operated in Iraq or Afghanistan is done pursuant to Army guidelines and regulations."

Back in Indiana, Michael Maynard has lost his job with FedEx and is now collecting disability. He says he was told by doctors at Camp Taji that the Army had tested the air around the pit and "the levels came back normal, and we'd just have to take their word for it." It seems that many soldiers were told that. ■

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Liberal-in-Law

My sister-in-law Franny came over from Albuquerque in the summer with her daughter Xuexia. Franny and I have been sparring ever since we first met in London

more than 20 years ago. The first round went to Franny. I am not exactly sure what happened on that occasion—maybe we were talking about money, maybe she wanted to know where she could lay her hands on some sterling—but I found myself saying, with elaborate English irony, “I say, Franny, do you have those machines in America that you can stick plastic cards in and get money out of?” Franny looked steadily at me and decided she wasn’t going to take any of this garbage. “We invented them, a-hole,” she said. What a girl! You could have heard her laugh in Galveston.

Franny rightly takes pride in her country’s achievements, and in her own jokes, and she knows her mind, which may explain why she is a left-wing conspiracy nut. She gets her news not from the *Albuquerque Journal* or even from the *New York Times* but from the *Guardian* and BBC websites, from PBS and Air America and Rachel Maddow. I subsist on much the same diet, though with a little help from my friends at the *Salisbury Review* and, occasionally, *L’Osservatore Romano*.

We agree on some important stuff, Franny and I, especially on why it is a bad idea to bomb Arab women and children in the name of peace and democracy. But there is a Left-Right tension in our dealings. She has a high opinion of Barack Obama, and I do not. She believes we should still give Michael Jackson the benefit of the doubt, and I do not. She believes the LBJ administration may have been dealing drugs in an

attempt to destroy idealism in the young, and ... I do ... not.

So we had a lively time of it in London, and most of the time I controlled myself. Just occasionally, though, I would let go and suddenly find myself growing hair and turning into a yellow-dog Republican. No sooner had Franny unpacked her bags than she launched into such a violent attack on the “Nazi” Fox News that I found myself defending Bill O’Reilly. No, really.

Worse was to come. A couple of days later, in an Italian café near the British Museum, Franny said she thought that Woodrow Wilson got things pretty much right, especially with the League of Nations, and I started to run around in circles and bark. Lookee here, Franny, I growled: not only should the U.S. not

the anti-neocon Right—where I still have a mailbox—that Bush and his buddies were “Wilsonian interventionists/internationalists/imperialists.” Yet how true is that? Of course Wilson, like Bush, was a dangerous liberal, and again like Bush, he believed in manifest destiny. Unlike Bush, however, he also believed in international law and international cooperation, no matter that he made a mess of things abroad. If Bush had been as willing to embrace the UN as the 28th president of the United States had been willing, in theory, to embrace the League of Nations, the world might have been spared a lot of misery and the U.S. much embarrassment.

That’s enough idle speculation, however. You never know where it will lead. The last thing we need right now, I suppose, is a rehabilitation of Woodrow Wilson. In any case, it all ended well here in London, as I rather thought it would. Franny and I found common ground in Buckingham Palace. My

FRANNY SAID SHE THOUGHT THAT WOODROW WILSON GOT THINGS PRETTY MUCH RIGHT, ESPECIALLY WITH THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

have intervened in World War I, but she should probably have stayed out of World War II as well. Plus, I yelped, George W. Bush was driven by idealism in 2001 to 2003, which just goes to show how dangerous Wilsonianism can be.

I was becoming someone I’d rather not be. I was starting to sound like Ed Anger. I was ashamed of myself. I hung my head, I hung my head.

But politics is a nasty and usually futile business. Later, I began to wonder whether Franny might have had a point about Wilson. It is an article of faith on

sister-in-law may be a man of the people, but she does like our royals. She and Xuexia went round the palace like a couple of girls from a parochial school in the 1950s. I was proud of them. Not all American visitors are quite as respectful. Last time I visited Buckingham Palace I spent some time in the company of a young car mechanic from New Jersey, who looked around nodding appreciatively. “Hey, this is great,” he said. “Know what it reminds me of? Graceland.” There’s only one word for a guy like that, right, Franny? ■

These Colors Run Red

The U.S. follows the Soviet Union into Afghanistan.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

WITH THE 30TH anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan approaching, the question retains its fascination: Why did the Russians do it? The misguided Afghan War sounded the death knell of the Soviet empire. How could they have been so stupid?

With the United States several years into its own Afghan War, the question possesses more than academic interest. However wrapped in irony and paradox, history is offering us instruction that we ignore at our peril.

When it came to divining the motive behind that Soviet invasion, Richard Pipes, the Harvard historian and Russian expert, expressed considerable certainty. As he told the *New York Times* in early 1980, the incursion into Afghanistan showed that the Soviets were on the march. "Russians do not seize territories that have no strategic importance," Pipes announced.

Afghanistan has no natural resources of importance, and the risk of antagonizing the West is very high for a bit of mountainous territory with a primitive economy, with a population that has never been subdued by any colonial power.

To run all these risks for the sake of occupying this territory makes little sense—unless you have some ultimate, higher strategic objectives.

Pipes and others believed the ultimate Soviet objective was to seize control of Persian Gulf oil, something they insisted the United States prevent. Pres-

ident Jimmy Carter heeded that demand. In what became enshrined as the Carter Doctrine, he declared that attempts "by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf" would constitute "an assault on the vital interests of the United States," to be "repelled by any means necessary." Everyone understood "outside force" to be a thinly veiled reference to the Soviet Union.

Yet in reality, the Kremlin had no intention of using Afghanistan as a jumping-off point for a grand offensive across Iran and Iraq to the oil El Dorado of Saudi Arabia. Nor did the Soviet legions possess the capability of doing so. Pipes got it wrong. According to their own lights, the Soviets had entered Afghanistan for defensive purposes—to prevent this remote outpost of communism from slipping out of the Soviet orbit.

Allow the Afghans to go their own way, and other Soviet satellites might follow—or so the Kremlin feared. To preserve their empire, therefore, Soviet leaders embarked upon what became a costly, open-ended war, oblivious to the fact that the real threats to their empire were internal: the Soviet economy had stagnated, and the Soviet system was fast losing its legitimacy. The Kremlin's stubborn insistence on keeping a grip on Afghanistan served only to hasten the empire's demise—a process helped along when the U.S. and its allies famously funneled arms and money to Afghan "freedom fighters" resisting Soviet occupation.

Meanwhile, the force that actually

threatened the Persian Gulf appeared not outside but inside: Saddam Hussein's Iraq. During the 1980s, Washington had forged a marriage of convenience with Saddam, supporting his war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. When Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990, President George H.W. Bush called the marriage off and thereafter denied its existence. The Carter Doctrine underwent a subtle transformation: preventing outsiders from dominating the Gulf no longer sufficed; defending the Gulf now required that the United States establish itself in a position of unquestioned primacy. The Gulf War began the effort, still ongoing, to incorporate the Persian Gulf more directly into the American empire.

That effort offended the sensibilities of some Muslims and provoked considerable resistance. American officials spent the next decade fixating on Saddam, said to be the source of all the woes afflicting that part of the world. In the meantime, a more genuinely dangerous adversary was gravitating to Afghanistan, of all places. By the 1990s, Afghan freedom fighters that Washington had enthusiastically supported in the 1980s were providing sanctuary to violent Islamists who wanted to wage *jihad* against the United States, primarily in retribution for sins committed under the aegis of the Carter Doctrine. Only with the events of 9/11 did Americans awaken—albeit only briefly—to the fact that efforts to turn Afghanistan into a Soviet Vietnam had produced poison fruit. When the Soviets

announced their withdrawal from Afghanistan back in 1989, the CIA station chief in Pakistan sent Washington a two-word cable: "We won." By September 2001, events were calling that verdict into question.

So at the behest of President George W. Bush, the Carter Doctrine once again underwent a subtle transformation. No longer did the waters of the Persian Gulf define its scope. U.S. ambitions after 9/11 widened to encompass the Greater Middle East, a newly invented geographic expression that included the very place the Soviet empire had run aground. As the wheel of history turned, Afghanistan once again found itself positioned to determine the fate of empires.

As if responding to some cosmic imperative, the best minds in Washington proceeded to devise policies incorporating all the worst features of the Soviet policies that had hurtled the Soviet Union toward self-destruction. The Bush administration committed U.S. troops to what quickly became a costly, open-ended war, beginning in Afghanistan, then shifting to Iraq, then reverting in the Obama era back to Afghanistan. Like the Politburo of olden days, our political elites remain oblivious to the possibility that the real threats to the American empire might be internal: an economy in shambles and basic institutions wallowing in dysfunction. The conviction that "victory" in Afghanistan will make things right grips Washington with the same intensity that once gripped Moscow—and with as little justification.

Spooked by a nonexistent Soviet threat to Persian Gulf oil back in 1980, the United States committed itself to a course that in the years since has metastasized into a gargantuan enterprise that vaguely aims at remaking the entire Greater Middle East. In a supreme irony,

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It is not a good time to be working in intelligence. CIA lawyers have advised that many officers should avoid traveling through Europe as pending court cases in Italy, Spain, and Germany could mean they are detained at airports and prosecuted for war crimes. Back at home, the Agency is bracing for a purge that could make the Frank Church hearings of 1973 look like a walk in the park. Some officers involved in "enhanced interrogations" have now decided to stay in government rather than retire to protect themselves against lawsuits, as government employees cannot be sued. There is a consensus that the Obama administration and the Pelosi Congress will use the Agency as a punching bag to keep the memory of Bush administration malfeasance fresh. The recent transfer of control over naming chiefs of station to the office of the director of national intelligence is being seen as a major blow, stripping the Agency of its *raison d'être*. A bizarre column, "What the CIA Hid From Congress," by Congresswoman Jane Harman, which appeared in the *LA Times* on July 25, is regarded as a harbinger of things to come. The article claims that the CIA concealed aspects of the so-called "Terrorist Surveillance Program." Harman, who blames the intelligence community for outing her connections to an Israeli spy, knows that the program was run by the National Security Agency, not the CIA, but her opinion piece leaves no doubt that a rogue CIA has been running around lying to everyone in sight. She describes how crafty Agency briefers misled her and other gullible representatives over the legal status of programs. If she had not been deceived, apparently she would have done the right thing and demanded an end to the illegal activity.



Metrics run the war in Afghanistan. The State Department has teams in every province in Afghanistan that is safe to travel in, all wildly compiling data to demonstrate what is happening and why. But the mass of numbers may have little relationship to what is taking place on the ground. Metrics cannot, for example, easily determine how much of the countryside is under Taliban control after dark. Such reports can predict that victory is just around the corner even when it is not. And while metrics appeal to audiences used to PowerPoint presentations, the intelligence community is seeing something different. A picture is emerging of creeping Taliban control, including inside the major cities, combined with growing popular hostility toward eight years of American occupation. Analysts note that little is known about the situation in neighboring Pakistan, a safe haven and recruiting ground for insurgents. Gen. Stanley McChrystal's clear, hold, and build strategy is only viable if the clearing is based on good intelligence to root out insurgents and does not involve killing the rest of the population. Analysts know that such intelligence does not exist, and they believe that it probably cannot be developed.

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Every Man a God-King

The danger of popular sovereignty

By Daniel McCarthy

THE LIBERL BLOGOSPHERE had a ready explanation when Scott Roeder, a Christian of Old Testament convictions, murdered Kansas abortionist George Tiller. Roeder was what Andrew Sullivan calls a “Christianist,” someone who believes “that religion dictates politics and that politics should dictate the laws for everyone, Christian and non-Christian alike.” The term echoes the description of terrorist groups like al-Qaeda as “Islamist,” though Sullivan allows that “only a tiny few” Christian or Muslim extremists are violent.

In the West as in the Middle East, the story goes, fanatical believers in medieval moral codes want to impose their views on others, either by force of law or terror. But the trouble with this account is that Roeder’s actions cannot be reconciled with traditional Christianity—and what’s more, those Islamists may be less religiously motivated than most Americans believe.

One man who should know is Michael Scheuer, former chief of the CIA’s bin Laden unit. In *Marching Toward Hell*, he highlights al-Qaeda’s stated motives, which have more to do with Israel, U.S. foreign policy, and the domestic politics of Arab countries than with Mohammad and the Koran. Scheuer also reveals a surprisingly modern side to al-Qaeda: the group draws much of its strength from “the desire of Muslims to attain what Jefferson called the ‘inalienable rights’ that the Founders believed to be hard-wired into human beings simply because they are human beings.” Bin Laden, a would-be tyrant in the eyes of

the West, “is urging Muslims to liberate themselves from tyranny in order to attain life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in terms that are compatible with their Islamic faith.”

Shocking though it may seem, Islamists are not opposed to rights or popular rule, but their understanding of those terms is very different from ours. Then again, maybe they aren’t so different: Scott Roeder also killed in the name of rights—the right to life. But religion is only a secondary dimension in rights-driven terror. The primary one is political: the belief that the state must uphold the values of the people (rightly understood), and should it fail to do so, ordinary men may take action. What underpins this belief is not a creed but an ideology—republicanism. Its roots lie not in the Middle Ages or Middle East, but in modern Europe.

Political theorists have long recognized the dangers inherent in republicanism’s near cousin, democracy. James Burnham likened democracy’s potential for abuse to the doctrine of the Divine Right of kings—at an extreme, “the law [becomes] the expression of, or rather identical to, the popular will. There is no independent law, human or divine; or, if there is, there is no source other than popular will that can proclaim, interpret and judge it.” Whatever the people desire becomes licit; whatever they dislike becomes criminal.

Yet the evil that Burnham described is not limited to democracy. It afflicts every kind of popular government, where political right is understood as emanating from the bottom up rather

than the top down. In a republic—literally *res publica*, the public’s affair—the government’s business (legislating, judging, and enforcing law) is the people’s business, and the people’s business (the passions, interests, and values of individuals) always threatens to become the government’s. The Divine Right of the public thus goes farther than the Divine Right of kings. An absolute monarch might say, “*L’état, c’est moi*,” but he could never pretend, as popular government does, to embody all of society.

Over the past 400 years, the idea that government rests on the consent of the governed has come to dominate Western thinking—and indeed thinking all over the world—to such an extent that it seems less a proposition than a natural fact. Yet there is nothing natural about it. Indeed, even after four centuries, popular government remains a revolutionary idea that often drives its adherents to assume for themselves the prerogatives of the state. *Vox populi, vox dei*, the assertion that the voice of the people is the voice of God, has led to terror as well as representative government.

Ideologies can have real-world consequences even when they distort reality. Popular sovereignty and the consent of the governed can hardly be taken as literally true—thousands, let alone millions, of human beings cannot jointly exercise power, nor is it realistic to think such multitudes can long consent to exactly the same thing. In practice it doesn’t matter: “the people” is a concept more than a reality, and in various permutations on republican theory even the

concept may be reduced to something more manageable. For Marxist-Leninists, “the people” becomes the proletariat, which is led by the workers’ vanguard, the Communist Party. A very small number of people may thereby claim to speak, and act, for the largest of populations—the workers of the world.

No elections or other outward signs of popular approval are necessary to confirm the party’s status as the workers’ true representatives. Similarly, bin Laden does not need to put his authority to speak on behalf of the Muslim *ummah* to a vote. If need be, the popular revolutionary can simply redefine the people to suit his purposes—as including all virtuous Muslims, for example, but not apostates so designated by the leader. Even in non-revolutionary situations, the republican ideal can become separated from quotidian reality. In the United States, every four years it transpires that some people are more truly American than others—they are the “real America,” regardless of how outnumbered they might be by inhabitants of the coasts and cities.

For the revolutionary, the reality of wide public support is less important than the myth that popular will provides sanction for violence.

Republicanism is a potent ideology because it is psychologically participatory—it makes individuals feel imbued with the moral and political authority to remake their world, indeed to create law, a truly godlike power. The state exercises the roles of legislator, policeman, judge, jury, and executioner only as an agent—the principal is the people, and what powers an agent possesses, a principal must also possess. Moreover, since the will of the people is not necessarily identical with the will of the majority, a minority—even a single person—may claim to be the true voice of the public.

In the Anglo-American context, republicanism arose as a reaction against monarchical abuses. But kings

are not different from other people, not even in their appetite for power—what St. Augustine called the *libido dominandi*. When monarchy becomes tyranny, one man’s *libido dominandi* can run unchecked. But by making every man a germ of the state, popular sovereignty has the potential to unleash all men’s *libido dominandi*. The republican ideology owes its popularity not just to its ability to preserve liberties and the social order, but to the sense of empowerment it creates in individuals, the feeling of a libido fulfilled.

Yet because the republican spirit leads people to believe that their will and values should be expressed in government, it follows that when the state fails to live up to those expectations, individuals feel thwarted and alienated. A passion has been excited, then denied. If a king did not do what his people wanted, they could chalk it up to his personal flaws. But when a government that claims that it is people fails to do what the public—or the person who thinks he speaks for the public—demands, the

appointing himself as the new legislator, policeman, judge, jury, and executioner. The principal is merely recalling delegated powers from a faithless agent. And now the citizen may create a new government that better exemplifies his will and values. If Protestantism entails the priesthood of all believers, unmediated republicanism entails the statehood of all free men.

All of this is radically at odds with medieval ideas of politics, religion, society, and values. Nor did earlier Christians feel spiritually frustrated—less than fully Christian or human—because the Roman state permitted infant exposure. The Christian abhorred this practice, he sought to reason with the emperor to persuade him to ban it, and he took into his own home what infants he could. But he did not feel the need to commit violence, in part because he accepted that the sword was not meant for his hands. God appointed rulers, including wicked ones, to enforce law; no member of the public could assume that power for himself.

The idea that one’s soul and one’s

IF PROTESTANTISM ENTAILS THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS, UNMEDIATED REPUBLICANISM ENTAILS THE STATEHOOD OF ALL FREE MEN.

entire theory of legitimacy upon which the state rests has been undermined. A practical justification for revolution and the psychological impetus for one (frustration) have emerged.

The republican ethos is a double-edged sword. So long as the individual and the public identify with the state, they are willing to expand its powers. Thus revolutionary France could enact the *levée en masse*—mass conscription—though the supposedly absolute king had never been able to do so. But once the citizen becomes alienated from the state, it loses all legitimacy in his eyes, and he believes he acts justly in

community depend upon the justice of one’s government—that self, community, state, and transcendent truth should all be aligned, or indeed identical—is a modern notion. The medieval Christian understood that while the king might rule by God’s leave, the king was not God and the king’s law was not necessarily the Lord’s. The king, of course, understood that however powerful in real terms the people or a legislature might be, neither was synonymous with moral right. Republicanism destroyed these distinctions, as the king’s power was absorbed by the people and the legislature. Now God’s appointed servant,

earthly legislative and enforcement powers, and the multitudinous interests of society were conceived of as having one body—the people.

To be sure, changes in Christian theology and politics preceded the emergence of popular sovereignty. Perhaps ironically, Protestantism midwifed the republicanism that Osama bin Laden is now using to transform the Islamic world. As Scheuer writes,

The Protestant Reformation of Messrs. Luther and Calvin was precisely an effort to restore the direct relationship between man and God and to eliminate the intermediary role played by the corrupt priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. Bin Laden, by slowly negating the ability of regime scholars to put a break on popular enthusiasm for jihad, has ensured the continuing growth of the worldwide Sunni insurgency he is inciting.

“The direct relationship between God and man” entails not only a spiritual connection but a political one as well—the passing of the sword to the people. Although medieval Islam had no formal hierarchy comparable to that of the Catholic Church, it nonetheless recognized a distinction between rulers, subjects, and religious authorities. Francis Fukuyama recently noted as much in the *Wall Street Journal*:

There was a functional separation of church and state. The ulama were legal scholars and custodians of Shariah law while the sultans exercised political authority. The sultans conceded they were not the ultimate source of law but had to live within rules established by Muslim case law. ...

This traditional, religiously based rule of law was destroyed in the Middle East’s transition to moder-

nity. Replacing it, particularly in the Arab world, was untrammelled executive authority ...

Islam effectively moved from a medieval system of religion and politics to what amounts to a latter-day version of the Divine Right of kings. Islamists like al-Qaeda are fighting not for medieval values but the more modern cause of popular religious and political self-determination. Bin Laden is closer to John Locke than to Savonarola.

The West can do little to help the Islamic world negotiate a path between bin Laden’s Jacobinism and the House of Saud’s autocracy. Certainly the Muslim example of corrupt princes legitimized in their oppressions by servile clerics suggests that Divine Right can be as great an evil as popular revolution. The most we can do is refrain from stoking the fires of nationalism and popular resentment by ending military operations against Muslims and ceasing to prop up tyrannical rulers. There might still be an Islamist revolution—but then, every popular revolution eventually has its Thermidor.

We have problems enough with republican ideology at home, in the form both of a state that still derives excessive power from popular sentiment—as the outbreak of patriotic mania after 9/11 demonstrated—and of individuals like Scott Roeder who express their frustrations by anointing themselves citizen revolutionaries. In each way, the identification of the individual and the masses with the state encourages the blurring of boundaries between coercive power and popular values.

There is no question of the United States adopting a medieval disposition of powers. The most we can hope for, as James Madison wrote in *Federalist* 10, is “a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government.” A popular enthusiasm for politics already exists in the U.S., and that pas-

sion entails a desire to see one’s values prevail in law. The proper channel for this kind of passion is a legislature. By their very nature, legislatures give voice to many views and are inefficient at promulgating decisive action. Legislatures are timid and consensus-seeking—or in a better light, they are deliberative and cautious. Either way, they do not quickly give energized factions among the people what they want.

Legislatures break up the conceptually monolithic popular will. They give it enough play that revolutionary frustration does not easily arise, yet the legislative process is so tedious that passion cools even as it seeks to realize its goals. No wonder Congress is so full of mediocrity. When legislatures are bypassed by courts or the executive, however, an opposite phenomenon occurs. Unpopular court decisions, because they give no voice to the public, generate tremendous resentment—as *Roe* and the civil-rights decisions of the Warren Court amply demonstrated. The executive, on the other hand—including not only the president but the efficient (relative to the legislature) agencies at his command—gives expression to popular mania all too readily. Again, 9/11 is a good example: the crisis stoked popular emotions, and the executive harnessed those emotions to create an extraordinary array of new powers.

Fundamentally, however, the root of republican evils lies in the individual character. The state’s efforts to shape that character can only be counterproductive. Instead, what is to be desired is strong religion that construes natural and divine law as checks upon personal political action rather than authorizations for it. In a democracy or republic, the Christian should pay less heed to Tom Paine and more to St. Augustine’s *City of God*. ■

Daniel McCarthy is TAC’s senior editor.

Shepherd Watch

AS SOON AS I STEP DOWN from the bus, out of the plastic yellow light, darkness and silence descend like heavy curtains. The street where I grew up is blanketed in night: the houses hide their faces behind their wings, and only the thin voices of crickets and cicadas keep me company.

This isn't how I remember our street. When I was little it seemed noisy and alive at night—parties down the block, dogs and sirens and the tidal rush of D.C. traffic down 16th Street. Shepherd Park in those days was feral suburbia, an enclave of apple trees and drug deals, lilacs and car thefts. It was shady in both senses of the word.

Now the fences are higher, and the cops finally scared off the dealer across the street. D.C. is marginally more competent—winters are no longer bring-your-own-snowplow—and shockingly more expensive. Our little street is hushed, held in suspense like a rocking cradle. Even the azaleas seem more tasteful now: no more camp clashing purple next to orange next to pink. The elementary school got new playground equipment after the year when the slide had no slide, turning it into a diving platform with mulch instead of water. I remember hiding in the old equipment, with sun baking the battered metal, burning my knees when I wasn't careful.

The school was Afrocentric, with an almost entirely black student population. To this day I can't name a single white boy I went to school with. We learned the seven Kwanzaa virtues; I am relieved that parents prefer to name their girls after *imani* (faith) and *nia* (purpose), rather than, say, "cooperative economics." I don't remember much

racial tension, but then, I was a deeply self-centered child and weird enough that my skin color was not one of the obvious targets of teasing. I do recall one teacher asking me, essentially, "Does 'bumpin' mean 'good'?" (Yes.) When I was very young, I thought most people in America were black, like all the authority figures in my world except for my parents and President Reagan. I got the good parts of black childhood culture—handclap rhymes and "Honey, I Love," double-dutch and the dozens, all my candied memories—without the burden. I didn't hear about having to be excruciatingly careful with the cops, about "good hair" and the paper-bag test until much later.

In the fall, the Japanese maples flared red, heat lightning shook the sky, and I started thinking about my Halloween costume. I was a melodramatic child, with a mossy tendency toward deliberate obscurity. One year I trick-or-treated as "the ghost of a wolf." No matter how bizarre my disguise, I always hoped someone would recognize me, open the door and know instantly who I was supposed to be. Of course, this never happened. Still, I loved Halloween: loved wandering in the acrid night, my costume like a secret shouted in a private language. A mask is above all an attempt to communicate, to create and reshape meaning over the silence of skin.

Shepherd Park is crowded between Rock Creek Park on the west and Maryland to the east and north. On a spring night, as my father nosed the car down into a fog-hung valley west of home, we might see a deer cropping grass by the roadside in a flurry of cherry blossoms. Go in the other direction and the night finally makes noise, amid Georgia

Avenue's beauty salons, Caribbean take-outs, and liquor stores. ("Last Liquor in D.C." is a geographical rather than apocalyptic advertisement.) To the north, the signs are now in Amharic, and the Sunday buses fill with light-skinned, high-cheekboned women in white dresses and headscarves, on their way to the Orthodox churches.

Home's southern border was less well-defined. I'm never sure how far south you have to follow Georgia before you're in somebody else's neighborhood. Once you get past the caesura of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, every syllable of the street comes to vivid and variable life. Partiers spill over the boundary of their stoop, with a red plastic cup of beer in one hand and the stroller handle in the other. A dreadlocked boy, in a black T-shirt with white print reading GIRL, ducks into a fish shop with his friends.

A knot of older black men sits on the yellow curb at the edge of a parking lot. They watch me go by, and we attempt to exchange the casual, don't-mind-me glances of city dwellers, but I calibrate the length of my glance or the quirk of my lips incorrectly and convey something I don't feel. One of the men says dryly, fightless and unhumbled, "Don't be scared, ma'am. We ain't gonna hurt you." I don't remember what I said in return, something quick and clumsy.

The night is a map of different kinds of silence—from the settled hush of leafy streets to the blank defeat of miscommunication. I wish I had a mask to speak the words my skin can't say. ■

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The Elusive Oakeshott

The great British philosopher defined conservatism less as a political program than as a way of life.

By Kenneth Minogue

AS A STUDENT, I felt at a disadvantage when facing radicals because they had a universal theory of what made societies tick. Indeed, the dominant Marxist version—about capitalism and its contradictions—claimed to be scientific. Hogwash, of course, but who was I to swim against the tides of history?

Michael Oakeshott destroyed such gullibility, which is one of the reasons he is such an indispensable figure. He was both a philosopher and a conservative. Many people want to put these things together and say that he was conservative philosopher, but Oakeshott would not have identified himself in that way. Understanding why is the beginning of wisdom in grasping his thought.

Those with a conservative temperament, he suggested, have a strong sense of their identity and are suspicious of innovation because change always means something lost as well as, perhaps, something gained. Put another way, the conservative enjoys the resources of his culture and is not forever fidgeting about big changes promising a better life.

That radicals are bold and adventurous and conservatives timorous is a claim that has confused many distinguished figures. F.A. Hayek, the great libertarian theorist, wrote one marvellously silly article on this theme. It appeared as an appendix to his *Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and was called “Why I Am Not a Conservative.” Hayek argued that conservatism was essentially a “timid”

refusal to take risks. Hayek was the theorist of a system in which prosperity depends on people taking risks—and facing up to the consequences. Successful risk-taking leads to fortune, unsuccessful to bankruptcy, and both are necessary in a free world. The essential feature of this economic adventure, of course, is that the risk-taker must be venturing his own life and capital. Hayek, of course, appreciated the horrors that result when politicians are able to gamble with other peoples’ lives and fortunes. On this, Hayek and Oakeshott, who were quite good friends, agreed.

Are conservatives merely timid sticks-in-the-mud? Let us push this question a little further. If timidity—which is to say, caution—is a fault, then boldness must be good. Hayek admired the excitement of a risk-taking capitalist system that created unprecedented prosperity for Europeans. But if it’s excitement you are seeking, there’s no doubt that is best supplied by radical doctrines such as socialism, communism, and fascism. Imagine the exhilaration of being a Bolshevik in 1917 and having the power to create a society, without rich and poor, in which everyone shared in prosperity. The same fervor moved those who believed in purifying the German race or overcoming social divisions through fascist totalitarianism in the Italy of 1922. Even the project of creating a welfare state in Britain after 1945 had a certain glamour. But these projects turned out to be

among the nastier passages of human history. Obviously some forms of radicalism are better than others, but all of these bids to radically transform society ended, at best, in reactionary boredom—and often in prodigious ugliness.

Such radical adventures, if they lasted long enough, brought about several generations of geriatric tedium. As we saw with Bolshevism, the old revolutionaries and their toadies clung to power, and radicalism resulted in a set of oligarchs with no higher ambition than to remain top dogs. Fortunately in our Western parts, democratic elections have provided happy relief from governmental folly, for the basic reason that we in the modern West are too restless to tolerate a supposedly perfect world. New generations have aspirations of their own.

Yet there is another reason why radical measures disappoint: they always promise improvement beyond the constant political adjustments that make up the politics of our lives. But perfection, by its nature, destroys the possibility of progress. And this helps to explain the necessity of conservatism as the basis of freedom. Our world is full of enthusiasts struggling to make the world a better place. Sometimes, poor devils, they succeed. There’s no disappointment like that of overblown expectations, even if not all are as dramatic as the collapse of the Bolshevik dream into the repressive backwardness of the Soviet Union. Constitutional government in democracies respects the ever-changing processes of

politics. Radical proposals promise substance and outcome—some superior final condition in which all needs are met.

At the end of his Inaugural Lecture at the London School of Economics, Oakeshott, whose conservatism rested on his skepticism of all grand plans for human improvement, expressed the conservative position in a famous image:

In political activity, then, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea: there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel: the sea is both friend and enemy: and the seaman's ship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behaviour in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion.

It is clear that Oakeshott was a philosopher concerned not at all with what policies a government ought to adopt but with political reality as it is experienced through the haze of illusions in which we live. Unlike recent political philosophers, he was not interested in normative questions. The idea of human rights he thought a rather second-rate caricature of the inherited Common Law freedoms of English-speaking peoples. Social justice was merely a bit of political salvationism trading by its name on the real conceptions of justice found in any stable state. In most of these views, Oakeshott was part of that remarkable generation of political philosophers who lived through the totalitarian excesses of the 20th century and, after World War II, reflected on them. It is striking that those concerned with the reality of politics in that period—figures such as Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and Hannah Arendt—still speak to us more directly than more recent figures dealing in normative argument.

The history of radicalism is encapsulated in the nervous breakdown John Stuart Mill experienced at the age of 20. Mill fell into melancholy and put to himself the question: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized ... would this be a great joy and happiness to you? And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, 'No.' At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down." Here we have a dramatic version of another slower recognition of the problems of radicalism: the disenchantments liberals suffer when they are, as Irving Kristol put it, "mugged by reality."

The paradox is that the exciting progressive ideals that attract the young end up in backwardness and boredom, while countries ruled in even moderately conservative ways create academic discoveries, grand projects such as interplanetary travel, and other such liberations and probes into the world. In other words, conservatism is not a timid refusal to take risks. That view is merely one of the self-flattering bits of chest-thumping found among radicals in thrall to their current illusion. Oakeshott made this point with his usual crispness when he remarked that someone may be conservative in politics but conservative in nothing else.

To be conservative in politics is to take one's bearings not from the latest bright idea about how to make a better world, but by looking carefully at what the past reveals both about the kind of people we are and the problems that concern us. As we get older, we often become conservative in our habits, in our family practices, and in our recognition of the richness of our civilization, but this evolution of our character into a set of habits in no way blocks adventurousness. The old no less than the young may be found starting new enterprises, sailing around the world, and solving arcane academic questions. But it is in

the ordinary business of life that we find our excitement, not in foolish collective dreams of political perfection.

Conservatism is thus a form of practical wisdom, and Oakeshott was an analyst of the very idea of practice. In the title essay in *Rationalism in Politics*, he discusses practice in order to diagnose one of its corruptions, what he calls "rationalism." In every activity, he suggests, some technical principles will be found that are useful in learning how to practice the skill. But technique alone is not enough. Cooks can learn a lot from books but only if they already have some grasp of what it is to go about preparing a meal. Every skill involves both technical and practical knowledge.

But what if one is a schoolmaster's son, such as Lenin, with political ambitions but no background in politics? How does such a person learn the art? Lenin read a lot of Karl Marx, who claimed to understand the direction of history, and thought that he understood how to rule a country better than the czar. Successful rule requires some sense of the limits of power. Lenin's solution to the problems of politics was simple; namely, if people disagree with you, shoot them. Stalin's art of ruling was even more elementary: people didn't even have to step out of line to end up dead. There was certainly excitement for a bit, but boredom and fear soon followed, and boredom is the nemesis of every radical project in politics. The best guide to radical politics is the story of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice."

Perfectionist dreams are never long absent from the margins of political life, though fortunately Anglophone countries have generally managed to avoid falling into dramatic radical follies. Our world is, however, full of ambitious people who want to take the world by the scruff of the neck and give it a good shaking. In Oakeshott's view, the wise thing is to keep away from such people.

In his many brilliant and amusing essays, he tells us a lot about why ambitious plans to change the world fail.

But Oakeshott was much less a political theorist than a philosopher. Why did he believe the expression “conservative philosopher” to be a misunderstanding? Because he thought philosophy was purely explanatory and thus could not be practical. He took philosophy to be a higher level of inquiry into the many different ways in which we make sense of the world. Philosophy was a theory of theories, something isolated from practice in its abstract perfection. It sought to understand the world, not to change it. Practical men were quite right to use the term “academic” with derision. Philosophers were mostly found in universities, and those who pursued such inquiry, possibly bookish unfortunates, pursued it for its own sake.

Practice, Oakeshott argued, is a particular way of responding to the world, and nothing academic can be of practical use until it is translated into serving something we might desire to achieve. At just that point, however, the idea will lose its academic quality. No doubt we can learn a lot from history, but what we learn is limited by the fact that no new situation exactly replicates any earlier one. A powerful element in Oakeshott’s thought is skepticism about the causal relationships we so assert in political discussion. Many things are valuable but not useful, and judging everything in terms of practical usefulness is the very model of what is fatal in logic and boring in conversation.

It will be clear from this rather precious and exact attention to cognitive detail that Oakeshott was an Oxbridge don to his fingertips. On the other hand, when war came to Britain in 1939, he volunteered, and as a private was billeted with an illiterate cockney youth for whom he wrote letters home. He ended up as an officer in Phantom, an elite

group whose task was to monitor the effects of bombardment from close up. The young journalist Peregrine Worsthorne was also part of this group, and after the war returned to Cambridge to finish his degree. He was startled to find his old comrade giving the lectures on the history of political thought.

In 1951, Oakeshott was appointed professor of political science in the government department at the London School of Economics, where he remained until his retirement in 1968. He ran his department efficiently and economically. He had no difficulty in dealing with the problems of what he called, at times somewhat disdainfully, “the world.”

One of the questions to which Oakeshott devoted a great deal of thought was the nature of the modern state, which is perhaps the central question of modern political philosophy. In his last book, *On Human Conduct* (1975), he argued that it might best be understood in terms of two distinct forms of human association. The most common understanding of why individuals come together is because they share an interest in some common enterprise—advancing the fortunes of some sport, winning a conflict, sustaining a religion. The appropriate way of ordering such an “enterprise association” is managerial. There is also, however, another kind of association, less well understood but vital to free societies. Oakeshott called it “civil association.” In this case, the members of the association are joined together in nothing but their submission to a set of rules and laws to which they must conform. A civil association must have authority to sustain order, and the business of such an authority would be to keep the rules in good repair, change them when necessary, and make sure that they are enforced.

It must be admitted that many of the considerations Oakeshott detected in

the modern state are currently reces-sive. From Hobbes’s theory of the sovereign ruling by authority to Max Weber 250 years later, defining the state in terms of a monopoly of force is a slow loss of civil sensitivity. The term “democracy” is strictly a constitutional belief about how authority is generated, but today it most commonly commends rather than names a government that serves some particular interest, such as that of “the people.” The drift of these and other confusions of our political talk has always been to transform the subtle and balanced features attributed to the state in the past into an enterprise that facilitates our political preferences. It would be hard to deny that political sophistication has given way to a kind of partisan brutishness, some elements of which Oakeshott thought had already been recognized by Tocqueville in 1848: “... the passions of man, from being political, have now become social.” And this means that men care now far more about “the satisfaction of substantive wants” and the power of government needed to supply them than about freedom and constitutionality.

One might assume that the unworldliness of Oakeshott’s conservatism means that he was merely a dealer in ideals, but that would be a mistake. He was a historian with a grasp of the long stretches of political experience in which the character of men and states reveal themselves, and he supplied an infinitely better understanding of our condition than is possible with vague talk about raddled words such as “freedom” and “rights.” To grasp how we have come to our present condition will not solve problems, but it may well help us discard some of our grosser illusions. ■

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Coming Up Aces

Legalization of online gambling looks like a sure bet.

By Freddy Gray

INSIDE THE GLITZY OFFICES of the Poker Players Alliance (PPA) in Washington D.C., the furniture looks impressive, but the employees do not. Staff saunter about in Bermuda shorts and flip-flops. The atmosphere is one of easily gained affluence.

But don't be fooled by appearances. This is a dynamic organization that wields impressive financial and political clout. The PPA is a leading force in the struggle to legalize and regulate Internet gambling in the United States—a fight it seems to be winning.

Executive director John Pappas is clearly a sharp operator, too shrewd to be drawn into making predictions about when U.S. restrictions might be lifted. "We're not at that stage yet," he says with a shrug. "There's a lot of work to do."

But the PPA and its partners in the online-gambling lobby appear to hold the legislative aces. In Barney Frank (D-Mass.), chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, they have an influential and committed ally. Since the Unlawful Internet Gambling Act (UIGA) was passed in 2006, Frank has been a zealous advocate of the right to wager on the Web. Earlier this year, he introduced the Internet Gambling Regulation and Taxation Act to repeal—or at least significantly relax—the UIGA and remove online betting from legal limbo. A hearing is expected in September.

If Frank's bid fails, supporters of online betting can turn to Sen. Robert Menendez's (D-N.J.) bill, introduced on Aug. 6, which focuses more narrowly on legalizing Internet poker—the PPA's primary concern—and other "games of skill." "We

love both bills like they are our children," says Pappas. "We hope they get through."

Gambling websites are gearing up for full entry into the U.S. market. In January, Betfair, the hugely successful UK-based Internet betting exchange, announced its \$50 million acquisition of the Television Games Network, America's leading interactive racing channel. Asked if this signaled the company's intention to establish itself in the U.S. ahead of a change in the law, a Betfair spokesman refused to comment. Such tightlippedness could be telling. In July, Goldman Sachs advised investors to expect U.S. trade limitations on Internet gambling to be removed, prompting a surge in the share price of certain online operators. The smart money, it seems, is on gambling reform sooner rather than later.

At any rate, it is widely accepted that U.S. gambling laws as they stand are ambiguous and ineffective. The UIGA does not technically ban online poker or games of chance, but prohibits financial organizations or individuals from knowingly accepting payments made in connection with Internet gambling. More reputable websites have complied by abandoning U.S. operations, but plenty of other companies—based in places like Antigua—have fewer scruples. "It's a total gray area," says Pappas. "There is no definition of unlawful gambling anywhere on our statutes."

Online wagering on sports is more obviously illegal. In 2002, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that such activity is forbidden under the 1961 Federal Wire Act. But again, the pervasive nature of the Internet renders the law all

but futile. Like drinkers in the Prohibition era, online gamblers find ways of indulging their habit.

For Pappas, the right to bet through a computer or a cell phone is a matter of individual liberty. "This is not about making money for offshore gambling sites who want to get into the American marketplace," he insists. "This is about the rights and freedoms of individuals who like to play something online and don't want government coming in and taking that right away from them. For me, that's antithetical to what a conservative philosophy is supposed to be about."

He would say that, of course. Yet the Republican-led passage of the UIGA in 2006 did turn many libertarian-minded American gamblers against the GOP. "After that," Pappas recalls, "our membership grew quickly from 75 or 100,000 to over a million members. It's not just about poker players: lots of people have gravitated toward us because they see this as the camel's nose under the tent."

Pappas says that members of the online gambling sector felt "mugged" by the 2006 ban: "It was kind of ramrodded through. There was never any proper or legitimate debate." He has a point. The law was attached to the bigger and unrelated Security and Accountability for Every Port (SAFE) Act. Former Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) inserted the UIGA clauses at the last minute before Congress adjourned for the 2006 elections—what politicians call a "midnight drop." The SAFE Act itself was a late "must pass" bill, designed to safeguard ports from terrorist infiltration. Any politician who objected to the legisla-

tion risked being branded soft on national security.

Regardless of the moral case against gambling, there can be little doubt that this was an act of dubious legislative leg-eremain, one that justifiably prompted cries of foul play. Pappas argues that Frist was currying favor among social conservatives in anticipation of a run at the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. Others point out, more darkly, that several of the politicians behind the ban, campaigning under the banner of the GOP's "American Values Agenda," were being paid off by Las Vegas-based casino groups and sports agencies that felt threatened by the rise of the Internet. Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.), a leading campaigner against gambling, reportedly received \$40,000 from the horseracing lobby.

Yet online-gambling advocates who felt legislatively hijacked three years ago are now much wiser—and much richer. Internet gambling is a rapidly expanding global business. A recent PricewaterhouseCoopers survey predicted that in 2011, the industry's worldwide revenue would reach \$144 billion.

With such riches floating around the virtual ether, it isn't surprising that the U.S. government is taking notice. Frank's new bill seeks to impose a 2 percent "licensing fee" on deposits for all Internet gambling companies operating in the United States. Such a tax could generate \$51 billion over ten years, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. As federal and state governments struggle with expanding debts in a recession, the impetus to levy the burgeoning Internet trade is greater than ever.

Moreover, as government resistance to online gambling is weakening, hostility from America's domestic gambling industry is disappearing. A few years ago, Harrah's Entertainment, the Las Vegas casino giant, employed Washington lobbyists to protect its interests against the

encroaching online sector. Today, the company has diversified into the Internet market and backs Frank's bill.

"The bricks-and-mortar folks are definitely coming around," says Pappas. "They are beginning to see a bottom line, particularly when they look at what's happening with poker." In parts of the world where online gambling is legal, he explains, the explosive growth of Internet poker, combined with the rise of poker TV, has proved a boon for casinos: "People are learning to play the game online, getting comfortable with it, and then saying, 'Alright, now I want to go to try it for real.' ... Harrah's have the rights to World Series Poker. If the law changed, they could monetize that and become \$1 billion richer."

In contrast to the casinos, America's sports establishment still presents a formidable obstacle. The NFL, for instance, spends millions each year opposing gambling reform. The league says that any softening of the law might "irreparably harm ... honest athletic competition." Most sports aficionados find that claim laughable, however, given the league's somewhat shady reputation. "They've been happy to effectively let the mob run sports betting for the last 40 years," scoffs Pappas. Far from opening the door to greater corruption, he argues that regulated Internet betting can help limit foul play by recording and monitoring transactions.

As the arguments stack up, opponents of Internet gambling increasingly don't like their odds. "It's going to be an uphill battle to stop it this time," admitted Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-Ala.), the ranking Republican on the Financial Services Committee in an interview with *Politico*. "We caught them off guard last time. This time we might not be so lucky."

The social-conservative case—that Web gambling turns children into addicts, destroys families, and damages society—might still appeal to many

American voters. But the online lobby has become more savvy in countering criticism. Gambling websites emphasize their commitment to "responsible" gaming and promise to put profits toward helping addicts. And Pappas is quick to note that, according to a study carried out by the National Centre for Social Research in Britain, the explosion in legal online gaming has not caused any notable increase in problem gambling. "People like to couch it that online poker players are degenerates, that the game breeds addiction, and all these awful things," he says. "But that's really not the case. ... they tend to be between the ages of 21 and 45, they are white, they are male, they make over \$60,000 a year. That could well be a typical Republican voter."

Right-wing pressure groups such as the Family Research Council remain determined in their opposition, however. Tom McClusky, FRC's senior vice president, tells *TAC* that Frank's agenda is to represent "foreign interests and the financial industry as opposed to families who would be devastated under his legislation." That may be true. Frank has lately been less concerned with passing his Internet Gambling Regulation and Taxation Act than with ensuring that Congress guarantees limitless bailouts to the financial institutions that gambled away so much American prosperity.

Yet the rest of nation's supposed moral majority remains strangely ambivalent. In a Rasmussen poll taken earlier this year, 44 percent of respondents said that gambling on the Internet should not be illegal, compared to 37 percent who thought that it should. Hardly conclusive, but without popular support, it is hard to see how the critics of online gambling—outspent, out-lobbied, and outmaneuvered in Washington—will be able to block legalization. As in poker, the player with the most chips wins. ■

Freddy Gray is TAC's literary editor.

Forced Out

The biggest bully on the block doesn't always win.

By Tom Streithorst

THE COLONEL didn't have a clue how much the mission cost—six Black-hawks, two Apaches, all those Humvees. He didn't even understand the relevance of my question. "No idea. I just ask for the assets I need, and they give them to me." I stared at the small pile of captured weaponry and wondered whether the raid had been worth the expense.

The night before, the colonel had invited me to film an assault on suspected al-Qaeda safe houses in Diyala Province. So that morning before sunrise, along with 80 American and Iraqi soldiers, I lined up on an airstrip to board the choppers. Going by air would give us the element of surprise. Once we hit the targets, 200 more soldiers rolling up in Humvees would meet us.

Iraq, with its dun-colored landscape, is not a beautiful country, but dawn is gorgeous everywhere. We flew for almost 30 minutes, watching the sun rise over irrigated fields. A sergeant pointed out the targets: concrete houses by a stream. The helicopters landed, we jumped out and ran toward them. I made sure I was a safe distance behind the soldiers, but no rifle fire greeted our arrival. Perhaps we had surprised the enemy.

No. When we kicked open the doors, no military-aged males were there, only women and children. One of the kids had a cold, and our medic gave him antibiotics. We milled around, searching the houses and nearby fields, but found little of interest—a few rifles, some reels of electrical cable, bits and bobs that

could perhaps be made into roadside bombs. The colonel seemed happy with the haul, but it struck me that the cost of gas for the two Apaches alone was worth more than the cache we unearthed.

I thought, not for the first time, that our high-tech military is not particularly cost-effective. We spend half a trillion dollars a year—more than the rest of the world combined—and what does it get us? We can't hold the ring road in Afghanistan, and the increased tranquility in Iraq is due more to *jihadi* hardliners alienating the secular population and payments to former insurgents than to our force of arms.

For most of human history, from Neolithic hunting bands up to the Franco-Prussian War, militaries were massively profitable enterprises. Genghis Khan's soldiers were just poverty-stricken pastoralists until they got on their ponies and sacked more civilized folk. The Roman invasion of Egypt won the tribute of grain that fed Italy for more than 300 years. The return on capital for William of Normandy's crossing the Channel or Hernán Cortés's conquest of Mexico is incalculable. That all changed with World War I.

In 1910, in one of the grand moments of mistimed prophecy, Norman Angell published *The Great Illusion*, which argued that the intricate webs of international trade and financial credit made conquest worthless. "When Germany annexed Alsatia, no individual German secured a single mark's worth of Alsatian property as the spoils of

war," he wrote. For Angell, the building of armies might have been appropriate in Alexander or Napoleon's day, but had no place in the globalized capitalist world. No need to conquer Alsace when you can just buy her goods.

Of course, 1914 proved him wrong, and for years his book was trotted out as an example of how no one can predict the future. Yet from another perspective, World War I confirmed Angell's thesis. The brutal expense of total war, its awful destructiveness, the fact that both sides in Flanders fields slaughtered not future slaves but their own customers, proved that victory could not be worth the cost. Angell was ahead of his time: the General Staffs in 1914 should have listened to him. But he underestimated the atavistic appeal of war.

Today, we live in the world Angell described. The destructiveness and brutality of the European civil war of 1914 to 1945, so costly in lives and treasure, changed our perspective. The spectacular expense of total war made it unprofitable. Even the victors were worse off postbellum. Today, thankfully, war between the great powers is unthinkable.

No matter what the dispute, Britain and Germany will not mobilize troops against each other. China will not invade America to force electronic goods upon us; America will not invade China to make it buy our Treasury bills. In an airport thriller, one can imagine a border dispute between Russia and China developing into a minor shooting war or even a Chinese army invasion of Taiwan.

But an attack on the United States by a major power seems less likely than aliens from Alpha Centauri, inspired by Michael Bay movies, invading Washington, D.C.

The geostrategic truth is that the United States is the safest nation on earth: Canada to the north, Mexico to the south, oceans on both sides. England survived Hitler because it is an

island. Russia defeated Hitler because it is the size of a continent. We are both continent and island. On our homeland, no one can take us. Terrorists can kill a few of us, but even the murder of thousands on 9/11 did not threaten our stability. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, they diminished American naval power in the Pacific. North of Houston Street, all of the effects of Sept. 11 were psychological. *Sharia* law in America was no more likely on Sept. 12 than it had been the week before.

fully used bombs in European neighborhoods in Algiers to drive the French out, but when Islamic groups used similar tactics in Algeria in the '90s, they were eviscerated by the army and police. The Tupamaros in Uruguay, the ERP and the Montoneros in Argentina, al-Qaeda in Saudi Arabia—all were crushed as soon as governments took the threat seriously.

In theory, the purpose of dramatic attacks is to incite such a level of repression from the government that it alienates ordinary citizens, convincing them of the justice of the terrorists' cause. Unfortunately for the bombthrowers, most of us hate mindless violence more than government repression.

Without attention, the terrorist is nothing. George W. Bush's response to 9/11 was everything an al-Qaeda recruiter could have wished. By pretending these terrorists posed an existential threat, he elevated a relatively insignificant group of middle-class pseudointellectuals into the biggest danger to America since the Wehrmacht. Imagine if, after 9/11, Bush had noted the obvious: despite their dramatic murder of our fellow citizens, the jihadis had no chance of overthrowing our government, influencing our policy, bringing back the Caliphate, or accomplishing their goals. Their crimes, while photogenic, were ultimately impotent. Such a response would have undercut the appeal of becoming a suicide bomber. Without a

global war on terror, the terrorist is an insignificant criminal.

But today, since war with other great powers is unthinkable, our young majors expect that the war on terror will keep them busy throughout their careers. And our military, they tell us, is too small for that "long war." Officers in Iraq have informed me repeatedly that we need a draft and larger budgets to ensure that the Army can complete its missions.

So every year we spend over \$500 billion on "defense"—and that is not enough. Warfare against those much less powerful than we should be easy, but it isn't. Americans in Vietnam, Soviets in Afghanistan, and Israelis in Gaza were all incalculably more powerful than their enemies, yet none won. War no longer goes to the bigger battalions. When Lord Kitchener deployed his Maxim guns against the Mahdi's men near Khartoum, Western technological superiority translated into victory. No longer—in part because we in the West are unwilling to take casualties, in part because we are somewhat less brutal toward noncombatants than we used to be, but mostly because winning is much more important to the other side.

The winner in a bar fight is not necessarily the bigger, stronger guy, although that helps. It is the crazy guy, who can get hit, get hurt, and not care, who focuses not on his injuries but on hurting his opponent. He gets punched, he grabs a bottle. A knife comes out, he fires his gun. A dog fights more fiercely at his doorstep than halfway around the world. The control of some valley in Afghanistan is more important to a man who grew up there than to a soldier just passing through from Kansas. The American Army won just about every battle in Vietnam, our soldiers killed hundreds of NVA for every casualty we took, but the Vietnamese won the war. The NVA wanted it more, so they were

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able to absorb more pain. Fifty thousand dead was more than victory was worth to us; to them, a unified Vietnam was worth two million bodies.

Violence is a tool. A mugger threatens you with a gun to get your wallet, an army marches into Iraq to compel Iraqis to do its bidding. But today our military is an ever more expensive instrument unequal to the real tasks before it. It is a hammer looking for nails. All of our military might won't stop banks from dangerous trading practices. It won't lower healthcare costs or rebuild Detroit or educate our children. It won't convince Shia to trust Sunni. And it certainly won't persuade Afghan peasants to renounce the burka or stop growing poppies. The problems of the modern world are impervious to the tools of force.

Imagine the Swat Valley once again a tourist attraction. Imagine South Waziristan tranquil, calmly accepting the rule of Islamabad. Imagine Kurds and Arabs happily sharing Kirkuk. How much better does that make your life? Why should you care? Why should your sons risk their lives for those goals? Why should your tax dollars pay? Those whose business is war have sold us a bill of goods. We have been told that the security of the United States is dependant on the security of everyone, everywhere. This is absurd. If Iran bombs Israel—which it won't—does that really matter to a small businessman in Indiana? If North Korea fires a missile, that is a much bigger problem for Tokyo or Seoul than for Seattle.

America isn't good at being an empire—and being an empire has not been good for us. For my entire life, we have had the world's strongest military, yet my generation has witnessed the decline of American power. When I was born, in 1958, a single Marine Corps brigade could impose the government we favored in Lebanon. American steel,

cars, manufacturing, and high-tech were state of the art. We were the world's greatest creditor. The world still wanted to buy what we made. The losers in World War II, Germany and Japan, have managed for 60 years to have us pay for their defense. Their savings enabled them to invest in factories and infrastructure. Both enjoy huge trade surpluses. We have a huge military. Who won?

Our obsession with the military is the natural residue of millennia of history. Until the creation of Goldman Sachs, war gave men the best chance to transform their lot, to make their fortune. War could turn a brigand into a lord, a queen into a serving girl. That is why the soldier remains sexier than the mer-

work out. Even if it had, isn't that a silly reason to go to war?

The educated elites of the Western nations rarely get into bar fights. Our experience of violence is generally mediated through Hollywood, our desire for a strong military more symbolic than practical. Back when we were the richest, most productive nation, when the rest of the world still owed us money, perhaps we could afford that luxury. When Soviet tanks were still massed across the German plains, perhaps we needed it. But today, the real dangers we face cannot be dealt with by military means, and we can no longer afford to waste resources on a huge military when we face no military threat.

BEING AN EMPIRE HAS NOT BEEN GOOD FOR US. FOR MY ENTIRE LIFE, WE HAVE HAD THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MILITARY, YET MY GENERATION HAS WITNESSED THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN POWER.

chant. The symbolism of warfare remains powerful even as it becomes ever less effective.

The best explanation I have heard for our tragic adventure in Iraq was from columnist Jonah Goldberg, quoting Michael Ledeen: "Every ten years or so, the United States needs to pick up some crappy little country and throw it against the wall, just to show the world we mean business." We invaded Iraq for symbolic reasons, hoping that then the world would fear and obey us.

If we wanted cheap oil, we could have made a deal with Saddam, letting him stay in power as long as he opened his fields to U.S. oil companies. If we wanted democracy in the Middle East, we could have recognized Hamas's victory in free elections in Palestine. We invaded Iraq to look tough. It didn't

One can argue that I am being optimistic, that by focusing on the last 60 years of Great Power tranquillity I am ignoring millennia of war. Maybe a large military is like an insurance policy: you hope you never need it, but it helps you sleep at night. But one shouldn't spend more on insurance than the value of one's goods. If we fear a Chinese invasion of Taiwan, let us keep our Navy strong in the Pacific. If we decide, for whatever reason, that stability in Baluchistan is important to our well being, let's teach our Special Forces to speak Balochi. But we can no longer afford to assume that the stability of the entire world is vital to U.S. national security or that it can be maintained by our overpriced military. ■

Tom Streithorst writes from London.

The Money Monopoly

How the Federal Reserve rips you off

By Ron Paul

MOST AMERICANS haven't thought much about the strange entity that controls the nation's money. Visitors to Washington can see the Federal Reserve's palatial headquarters, the monetary parallel to the Supreme Court or the U.S. Capitol. We hear the Fed chairman testify to Congress, citing complex data, making predictions, and attempting to intimidate anyone who would take issue. He postures as master of the universe, completely knowledgeable and in control.

But how much do we really know about what goes on inside the Fed? Even with the newest round of bailouts, journalists had difficulty determining where the money was coming from and where it was headed. From its founding in 1913, secrecy and inside deals have been part of the way the Fed works.

It says that its job is to keep inflation in check. But this is like the car industry claiming to control road congestion. The Fed might attempt to stop the effects of inflation, namely rising prices. But under the old definition of inflation—an artificial increase in the supply of money and credit—the reason for its existence is to generate more, not less.

The banking industry has always had trouble with the idea of a free market that provides opportunities for both profits and losses. The first part, the industry likes. The second is another matter. That is the reason for the constant drive in American history toward the centralization of money, a trend that not only benefits the largest banks with the most to lose from a sound-money system, but also the government, which is able to use an elastic system as an

alternative form of revenue support.

Whenever instability turns up, we see efforts to socialize the losses, but rarely do people question the source of instability. Economist Jesús Huerta de Soto places the blame on the institution of fractional-reserve banking. This is the notion that depositors' money in use as cash may also be loaned out for speculative projects, then re-deposited. The system works as long as people do not attempt to withdraw their money all at once. In the face of such a demand, banks turn to other banks to provide liquidity. But when the failure becomes system-wide, they turn to government.

The core of the problem is the conglomeration of two distinct functions of a bank. The first is warehousing, whereby banks keep money safe and provide checking, ATM access, record keeping, and online payment, services for which consumers are traditionally asked to pay. The second service the bank provides is a loan service, seeking out investments and putting money at risk in search of return.

The institution of fractional reserves mixes these functions, such that warehousing becomes a source for lending. The bank loans out money that has been warehoused—and stands ready to use in checking accounts or other forms of checkable deposits—and that loaned money is deposited yet again in checkable deposits. It is loaned out again and deposited, with each depositor treating the loan money as an asset on the books. In this way, fractional reserves create new money, pyramiding it on a fraction of old deposits. An initial deposit of \$1,000, thanks to this "money multiplier," turns

into \$10,000. The Fed adds reserves to the balances of member banks in the hope of inspiring ever more lending.

As customers, we believe that we can have both perfect security for our money, withdrawing it whenever we want and never expecting it not to be there, while still earning a return on that same money. In a true free market, however, there tends to be a tradeoff: you can enjoy the service of a warehouse or loan your money and hope for a return. The Fed, by backing up fractional-reserve banking with a promise of endless bailouts and money creation, attempts to keep the illusion going.

The history of banking legislation can be seen as an elaborate attempt to patch the holes in this leaking boat. Thus have we created deposit insurance, established the "too-big-to-fail" doctrine, and approved schemes for emergency injections to keep an unstable system afloat.

The story can be said to begin in 1775, when the Continental Congress issued paper money called the Continental. The currency was inflated to the point of disaster, the first great hyperinflation in U.S. history, and it gave rise to a hard-money school of thought that would agitate against central banking and paper money for generations. It also explains why the Constitution placed a ban on paper money and permitted only gold and silver.

In 1791, the First Bank of the United States was chartered, and in 1792, Congress passed the Coinage Act recognizing the dollar as the national currency. Fortunately, the charter on the incipient central bank was not renewed and expired in 1811.

In 1812, with war raging between Britain and the U.S., the government issued notes to finance the war, resulting in suspensions of payment as well as inflation. During a war, inflation is something you might expect, but instead of permitting normal conditions to return, in 1816, Congress chartered the Second Bank of the United States, which aided and abetted ever more expansion and the creation of a boom-bust cycle.

Nineteenth-century banking theorist Condy Raguet explains:

The sanction of the community was extended to them during the continuance of the war then existing with Great Britain, on account of the belief that their condition was forced upon them by the peculiar circumstances of the country; but no sooner had peace returned in the early part of 1815, than all their pledges were violated, and instead of manifesting by their actions a desire to contract their loans so as to place themselves in a situation for complying with their obligations, they actually expanded the currency by extraordinary issues, whilst there was no existing check upon them, until its depreciation became so great that speculation and overtrading in all their disastrous forms, involved the country in a scene of wretchedness, from which it did not recover in ten years.

The inevitable downturn came—the Panic of 1819. But it ended peacefully precisely because nothing was done to stop it. Jefferson pointed out that the panic was only wiping out wealth that was fictitious to begin with. After massive political agitation, and following Andrew Jackson's Executive Order that withdrew the federal government's deposits from the bank, the Second Bank closed in 1836.

But the war between North and South set off another round of inflationary

finance, eventually killing off wartime currencies and prompting another deflation that set the stage for a gold standard that was solid but not perfect. Its flaws—banks were permitted fractional reserves and were beginning to rely on regulations to dampen competition—created the dynamic that led to the Federal Reserve.

Jacob Schiff, head of Kuhn, Loeb, and Co., gave a speech in 1906 that began the push for a central bank. He explained that the “country needed money to prevent the next crisis.” He worked with his partner Paul Moritz Warburg and Frank Vanderlip of the National City Bank of New York to create a commission that called for a “central bank of issue under the control of the government.” They began to work within other organizations to push the agenda, winning over the American Banking Association and important players in government.

Once the groundwork was laid, the crisis atmosphere of 1907 assisted. During this brief contraction many banks stopped paying out gold to depositors. This led to a consolidation of opinion in favor of a general guarantor.

In 1908, Congress created a National Monetary Commission to look into banking reform. It was staffed by people close to the largest banks: First National Banking of New York, Kuhn Loeb, Bankers Trust Company, and the Continental National Bank of Chicago. By 1909, President William Howard Taft endorsed a central bank and the *Wall Street Journal* ran a 14-part series making the case. The series was unsigned but was written by a NMC member, Charles A. Conant, and made the usual arguments for elasticity, but added additional functions that the central bank could play, including manipulating the discount rate and gold flows as well as bailing out failing banks. Pamphleteering, scholarly statements, political speeches, and press releases by merchant groups followed.

By November 1910, the time was right for drafting the bill that would become the Federal Reserve Act. A meeting was convened at a Georgia resort called the Jekyll Island Club, co-owned by J.P. Morgan. The players took elaborate steps to preserve secrecy, and the press reported that it was a duck-hunting expedition. But history recorded who was there: John D. Rockefeller's man in the Senate, Nelson Aldrich; Morgan senior partner Henry Davison; German émigré and central-banking advocate Paul Warburg; National City Bank vice president Frank Vanderlip; and NMC staffer A. Piatt Andrew, who was also assistant secretary of the Treasury. Two Rockefellers, two Morgans, one Kuhn Loeb person, and one economist—the essence of the Fed: powerful bankers and government officials working together to make the nation's money system serve their interests, with economists there to provide scientific gloss. It has been pretty much the same ever since.

The structure they proposed would be “decentralized” into 12 member banks, providing cover for the cartelization, and was presented to the National Monetary Commission in 1911. Then the propaganda was stepped up with newspaper editorials, phony citizens' leagues, and endorsements from trade organizations.

With a vote by Congress, the government conferred legitimacy on a cartel of bankers and permitted them to inflate the money supply at will, insulating them against the consequences of bad loans and overextension of credit. Hans Sennholz called the creation of the Fed “the most tragic blunder ever committed by Congress. The day it was passed, old America died and a new era began. A new institution was born that was to cause, or greatly contribute to, the unprecedented economic instability in the decades to come.”

It was a form of financial socialism that benefited the rich and powerful. As

for the excuse, it was then what it is now: the Fed would protect the monetary and financial system against inflation and violent swings in market activity. It would stabilize the system by providing stimulus when it was necessary and pulling back on inflation when the economy overheated.

A statement by the comptroller of the currency in 1914 promised nirvana: the Fed “supplies a circulating medium absolutely safe.” Further, “under the operation of this law such financial and commercial crises, or ‘panics,’ as this country experienced in 1873, in 1893, and again in 1907, with the attendant misfortunes and prostrations, seem to be mathematically impossible. ... It is hoped that the national-bank failures can hereafter be virtually eliminated.”

Reality has been much different. Consider the dramatic decline in the value of the dollar since the Fed was established. The goods and services you could buy for \$1 in 1913 now cost nearly \$21. We might say that the government and its banking cartel have together stolen \$0.95 of every dollar as they have pursued a relentlessly inflationary policy.

As for the abolition of panics, 20th-century recessions documented by the National Bureau of Economic Research include: 1918-19, 1920-21, 1923-24, 1926-27, 1929-33, 1937-38, 1945, 1948-49, 1953-54, 1957-58, 1960-61, 1969-70, 1973-75, 1980, 1981-82, 1990-91, 2001, 2007, and the current panic with no end in sight. Some mathematical impossibility!

One aspect of the promise that has been kept: banks don't fail as they used to. But is this really a good thing? If businesses are not allowed to fail, what gives them incentive to succeed with soundness and productivity to the common good? In a competitive and free system, deposits would not be unsafe; any that were not paid back as promised would fall under fraud laws. Deposits that would be unsafe would be loans to the

bank that would be treated like any other risky investment. Consumers would keep a more careful watch over the institutions that are handling their money and stop trusting regulators in Washington.

As the years have gone on, the Fed has been granted ever more leeway in the means it uses to inflate the money supply. It can now buy just about anything it wants and write it down as an asset. When it buys debt, it buys with newly created money. It maintains a strict system of low-reserve ratios that allows banks to pile loans on top of deposits and take the new deposits as the basis for ever more loans. It can set the federal funds rate at a level to its liking and influence interest across the entire economy. It intervenes in currency markets.

The Fed's architects might have imagined that it would help smooth out the business cycle—provided you think that the real problem of the cycle is its bust phase when credit contracts. And the Fed can provide liquidity in these times by printing money to cover deposits. But if you think of the cycle as beginning in the boom phase—when money and credit are loose and lending soars to fund unsustainable projects—matters change substantially.

In 1912, Ludwig von Mises wrote *The Theory of Money and Credit*, which warned that central banks would worsen and spread business cycles rather than eliminate them. The central bank can reduce the interest rate that it charges member banks for loans. It can buy government debt and add that debt as an asset on its balance sheet. It can reduce the reserve coverage for loans at member banks. But in doing all of this, it is toying with the signals that the banking industry sends to borrowers. Businesses are fooled into taking out longer-term loans and starting projects that cannot be sustained. Investors flush with new cash buy homes or stocks, activities that spread a buying-and-selling fever.

This activity creates a false boom. When lower interest rates result from real saving, the banking system is signaling that the necessary sacrifice of present consumption has taken place to fund long-term investment. But when central banks artificially push down rates, they create the impression that the savings are there when they are absent. The resulting bust becomes inevitable as goods that come to production can't be purchased. Reality sets in: businesses fail, homes are foreclosed upon, and people bail out of stocks.

International markets complicate the picture by allowing the boom phase of the cycle to continue longer than it otherwise would, as foreigners buy up and hold new debt, using it as collateral for their own monetary extensions. But eventually they, too, become ensnared in the boom-bust cycle of false prosperity followed by all-too-real bust.

Knowledge of this problem was not well spread among bankers and government officials in 1913, when the Federal Reserve was created. But it wouldn't be long before it became apparent that the Fed would bring not stability but more instability, not shorter booms and busts but deeper and longer ones. The longest one of all, dramatically exacerbated by bad economic policy, was the Great Depression. And now we appear to be entering another phase of extreme crisis—courtesy of the Federal Reserve. ■

Ron Paul is an 11-term congressman from Texas, bestselling author, and former presidential candidate. This essay is excerpted from the book END THE FED, Copyright (c) 2009 by the Foundation for Rational Economics and Education, Inc (FREE). Reprinted by permission of Grand Central Publishing, a Division of Hachette Book Group, Inc., New York, NY. All rights reserved.

United States of Paranoia

Phantom menaces populate the imaginations of Americans across the political spectrum, not just those on the populist Right.

By David Brown

THE POWER of the apocalyptic has never ceased to tease the American mind. A glance through the nation's past reveals a tenacious flirtation with conspiratorial fantasies and one-idea men. This rage for machinations is all the more curious considering the many generations that the U.S. basked in the security of splendid isolation. Perhaps the lack of external nemeses coaxed the darker corners of the American imagination into a twitchy suspicion of native demons.

Not even our textbook heroes have evaded the paranoid's gaze. The post-Revolutionary Federalist press masaged Jefferson's private Deism into a menacing infidelism; the Anti-Masonic Party denounced Andrew Jackson's fraternal ties; John Birch Society founder Robert Welch called Eisenhower a possible "conscious, dedicated agent of Communist Conspiracy." Today, the chase to stamp out villainy spins with the velocity of 24/7 news cycles.

The recent murders of Kansas abortion doctor George Tiller and Holocaust Memorial Museum guard Stephen Tyrone Johns have prompted pundits and professors to blame radio rhetoric. "Right-wing extremism," wrote *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, "is being systematically fed by the conservative media and political establishment." Yet one has to wonder if these crimes are the outcome of airwave suasion or the sick behavior of sick individuals. James von Brunn, the museum

gunman, went to jail for seven years in the 1980s for attempting to kidnap the Federal Reserve Board—the entire board—over high interest rates.

The apportioning of collective guilt for individual acts of violence is nothing new. Its most famous American example is an object lesson in the triumph of conspiracy thinking over truth. The evidence shows beyond a reasonable doubt that Lee Harvey Oswald killed John F. Kennedy: witness Howard Brennan spied Oswald in the Texas School Book Depository firing on the president's motorcade; the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle used in the assassination contained tufts of cotton fiber matching the shirt Oswald was wearing at the time of his arrest; firearms experts for the Warren Commission determined that all of the bullets fired at the motorcade belonged to Oswald's rifle. But polls show that most of us believe nearly anyone except Lee Harvey pulled the trigger: the CIA, FBI, LBJ, Cubans, organized crime—the list goes on.

For a grieving nation, Oswald, a communist sympathizer to the left of JFK, ironically came to symbolize right-wing resistance to the dawning era of civil-rights reform. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren said shortly after the assassination, "A great and good president has suffered martyrdom as a result of the hatred and bitterness that has been injected into the life of our nation by bigots." The Rolling Stones broad-

ened Warren's condemnation in their 1968 song "Sympathy for the Devil" to indict an entire culture sickened by violence: "I shouted out, 'Who killed the Kennedys?' When after all it was you and me."

The Kennedy conspiracies demonstrate the potency of political obsession, as well as the unsettling fact that fantasy often steers public debate. The most distinguished interpreter of this phenomenon, Richard Hofstadter, called it "the paranoid style in American politics." Searching for a way to explain postwar liberalism's irreconcilables, he constructed a fresh, provocative way to reinterpret contentious episodes in the American past in which irrationality appeared to trump reason. Slave-Power-fearing abolitionists, Wall-Street-hating Populists, and Catholic-baiting Protestants peopled his collection of native oddities.

Had Hofstadter written his essay in, say, 1970, he might very well have emphasized the Weatherman-esque spasms of an alarmist Left. But in 1964, the presidential election year "The Paranoid Style" appeared in *Harper's*, he had the momentum-building Goldwater movement locked firmly in his sights. Accordingly, he singled out radical conservatism's penchant for conspiratorial politics. Among his more exotic specimens, Hofstadter identified a rag-tag fringe Right that confused FDR with the dictatorial likes of a Stalin or Mussolini and believed that

comrades George Marshall and Dean Acheson ran a Kremlin-cozy foreign policy. But how much did this really matter? The crank vote, after all, never congealed into a ruling consensus. And Hofstadter was delighted to register a post-election mea culpa. "There are times when it is a pleasure to acknowledge that one has been wrong," he wrote in *Encounter*. "In ... October ... I concluded that 'it is now much easier than before to believe that America is visibly sick with a malady that may well do all of us in.' As it turned out, Goldwater's showing was far from respectable." In fact, while Hofstadter emphasized trouble on the Right, it was the center-left that overloaded the welfare-warfare state with a hastily constructed Great Society and unpopular war in Vietnam. Paranoid or not, the ultras could claim only limited success in their assault on liberalism; the heirs of FDR bore much of the blame.

FROM PHANTOM WMD, TO THE FORGING OF A PATRIOT ACT SURVEILLANCE STATE, TO THE USE OF "ENHANCED INTERROGATION TECHNIQUES," A PARANOID MINDSET INFORMED AMERICAN ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Still, when used carefully, the paranoid-style paradigm has much to tell us. It reveals the impact of popular mood on public policy, it clarifies the interplay between alienation and ideology, and it offers insights to otherwise inexplicable behavior. If the anti-fluoridationists in Hofstadter's time reduced government to grand conspiracy, we have more recently seen government engage in its own troubling flights of fancy. The agony of 9/11 sent the Bush administration into a tailspin from which it never recovered. Rather than cool leadership, the country got a pack of doomsayers who radically oversold the threat of Saddam Hussein. While Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice conceded that definitive proof of an Iraqi nuclear program did not exist, she followed that up with "we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Appearing on "Fox News Sunday," Vice President Dick Cheney sounded like a man with one foot in the bunker: "we're at the point where we think time is not on our side." And George W. Bush himself ran wild with the British government's dodgy "September Dossier" claim that Iraq could deploy WMD within 45 minutes of an order to use them. The president repeated this error to Congress, at a Rose Garden press conference, and on his weekly radio address.

From phantom WMD to the forging of a Patriot Act surveillance state to the use of "enhanced interrogation techniques," a paranoid mindset informed American actions in the Middle East. In the wake of the Soviet implosion, terrorism had replaced communism as the

prophetic enemy. Interestingly, the old postwar "crack pots," who believed a left-leaning State Department gave Eastern Europe to the Soviets and aided Mao's victory in China, may have been on firmer foundation than the anti-terrorist crusaders of the 21st century. Communism had exponentially expanded; the USSR did possess weapons of mass destruction; and espionage flourished. No comparable danger challenged America on the eve of the Iraqi invasion. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld described the intensive U.S. bombing campaign in the days leading up to the March 2003 land offensive as designed to promote "shock and awe." But that

work had already been accomplished. The trauma of half-truths handed down by the administration over the preceding months produced an anxious, uncertain public opinion. Many presumed the enemy stood at the gates.

If Hofstadter's paranoid style offers a template to contextualize certain post-9/11 policies, George Orwell's dystopic *1984* is even more suggestive. According to Hofstadter, society's marginalized are typically susceptible to stabs of fanaticism, yet in Orwell's novel, power rather than prole advances paranoia. In Oceania, fears of informant neighbors and child spies became the bread and butter of Big Brother. "The scientist of today," Orwell wrote, "is ... a mixture of psychologist and inquisitor, studying with extraordinary minuteness the meaning of facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice, and testing the truth-producing effects of drugs, shock therapy, hypnosis, and physical torture..."

For those in Oceania who survived the sensory assault, a state-enforced newspeak stood between them and the truth. The Bush team's national-security lexicon would have made Orwell proud. Guantanamo prisoners were rebranded "enemy combatants," while eavesdropping without warrants on the conversations of American citizens became a "Terrorist Surveillance Program." President Obama promised a new approach, but so far we have old policies with new names. Tired of "terrorism?" Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano suggests "man-caused disasters." And in place of the much abused "war on terror," we now have the spectacularly banal "overseas contingency operations."

The inventive Bush-ese is instructive on two counts. First, it illustrates the ways in which power can stir up a conspiratorial mindset among public, and second, it offers a useful corrective to

Hofstadter's contention that majority parties are by definition exempt from pangs of paranoia. When challenged by one critic in 1965 to diagnose the Johnson administration's invasion of the Dominican Republic and expanding military commitment in Vietnam as exaggerated responses to Cold War tensions, he demurred. LBJ, he argued, bowed before a potent mainstream anti-communism that proved impossible to ignore.

casts his vote in hopes of realizing them." This materialist approach, popularized by the historian Charles Beard in his controversial work *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, struck Hofstadter's generation (weaned as much on the Freudian revolution as was Beard's on the Marxian) as reductionist and formulaic. It sought, rather, to explore movers and shakers' minds as well as their pocketbooks.

must be met with a righteous reaction. On this score, liberal-conservative bipartisanship is the rule rather than the exception. Wilson's vision of a "war to end all wars" through the toppling of old European aristocracies was echoed in Bush's efforts to bring peace to the Middle East through regime change. Similarly, Henry Luce's assurance that his nation stood on the cusp of a rising American Century reverberated in Francis Fukuyama's tribute to liberal democratic eschatology, *The End of History*.

BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THIS TYPE OF ABSOLUTIST THINKING, AND EACH POLE HAS ON OCCASION RIDDEN THE POLITICS OF CRISIS TO POWER AND POVERTY.

In this regard, Hofstadter failed to see the full implications of the theory he helped to father. For history is replete with examples of presidents, emperors, czars, and kings afflicted by private demons and public pressures. On a practical level, ruling regimes can never take their authority for granted, as revolution, plebiscites, and palace coups are ever present possibilities. In response, power has been known to purge whole populations, draw up elaborate enemies lists, and fill its councils with pliant yes-men. In America, where the two-party system ensures hotly contested campaigns, both major parties idle in a state of apprehension. The potential for political catastrophe is never farther away than the next election.

Still, Hofstadter's linkage of paranoia, politics, and history retains a vital explanatory capacity. Keep in mind that until the 1950s, it was widely taken for granted that, as one scholar noted, "political man is basically a rational being who estimates what his economic interests are, forms pressure groups to advance these interests, and then coolly

To ignore the apocalyptic strain in America—or to reduce it to an under-world peopled by pro-life extremists, white supremacists, or the media Right who egg them on—is too simple. The idea of the U.S. as destiny's "redeemer nation," after all, has forever shaped its development. Jonathan Edwards's grandson Timothy Dwight, Yale's eighth president and a patriotic poet, looked forward to the impending American millennium when he wrote in 1801:

Here Truth, and Virtue, doom'd no
more to roam,
Pilgrims in eastern climes, shall find
their home;
Age after age, exalt their glory higher,
That light the soul, and this the life
inspire;
And Man once more, self-ruin'd
Phoenix, rise,
On wings of Eden, to his native skies.

Leaving feudalism, religious violence, and superstition behind, America, Dwight believed, was a chosen land. And any attempt to subvert the Republic—whether by Jesuits or Jacobins, Bolsheviks or bin Ladens—

As long as Americans conceive of their nation as a kind of Divine Right experiment in human freedom and moral progress, they must bear the burden that comes with a two-dimensional worldview. Both Left and Right are susceptible to this type of absolutist thinking, and each pole has on occasion ridden the politics of crisis to power and poverty.

Now nearing 50, the paranoid-style thesis ambles easily along, occasionally derided but more often appropriated, whether acknowledged or not. We live, after all, in a country of contradictions and thus in need of its unique explanatory insights. Puritan piety idles alongside capitalist excess, imperial dreams hide behind a wishful republicanism, and we honor a shared national heritage while emphasizing an everyman-his-own-identity diversity. The only nation in the history of the world created under the compulsion of Protestantism, *laissez faire*, and immigration, America remains a country tethered by cultural and economic structures commonly in tension. It doesn't take a paranoiac to see that. ■

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Imagination Takes Flight

The life and mind of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

By Neil Clark

What moves me so deeply about this little prince sleeping here is his loyalty to a flower, the image of a rose shining through his whole being like the flame of a lamp, even when he is asleep. I found him to be more fragile still. Lamps should be protected with great care: a gust of wind can extinguish them.

IN ONE OF THE MORE poignant moments of Michael Jackson's memorial service, actress Brooke Shields, a close friend of the pop star, said that Jackson was not "The King"—the title he appropriated—but "The Little Prince." She quoted the above passage from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's famous book, along with its most memorable lines: "It is only with one's heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye."

The fact that nearly 70 years after its publication *The Little Prince* is mentioned at the funeral of one of the most famous men on the planet is a testament to its enduring popularity and the universality of its themes. It is also a tribute to the remarkable French aviator-poet who disappeared 65 years ago on a reconnaissance flight over the Mediterranean.

Saint-Exupéry's work, with its bird's eye view of humanity, contains some of the most profound observations on the human condition ever written. "A person taking off from the ground," he said, "elevates himself above the trivialities of life into a new understanding."

Born into an old French family at the turn of the century, he enjoyed a privileged upbringing. According to his biographer, Curtis Cate, Saint-Ex's passion for aviation was stimulated when he was 9, when his family relocated to Le Mans, the city where American flying pioneer Wilbur Wright had moved a year earlier. At the age of 12, he was taken up in the air by a flying ace, and the event moved him so deeply that he wrote a poem about it.

He trained to be a pilot, but after breaking his skull in a crash gave in to pressure from his family and took a desk job in Paris, working as a production supervisor at a tile-making company. But at the age of 26, he returned to the air, becoming one of the pioneers of early postal flight. The job, which entailed opening up new routes in Africa and South America across mountains and deserts, was extremely hazardous, but Saint-Ex, bored of the artificiality of Parisian society, had found his calling. "Despite the dangers of the work, and in a sense because of the dangers, the next five years were to be the happiest and most secure of his life after his exile from the magical domain of childhood," writes William Rees, one of the writer's English translators.

Saint-Exupéry's flying adventures also provided a rich source of writing material. His first book, *Courrier Sud* (*Southern Flight*) appeared in 1929. But it was the publication of *Vol de Nuit* (*Night Flight*) two years later that made his name. The book, which became an international bestseller, tells the story of

an airmail pilot sent to deliver mail in life-threatening weather conditions. The theme of brave individuals putting their lives on the line for the common good and achieving fulfillment through a sense of duty resurfaces throughout Saint-Exupéry's work.

He contrasted the selflessness and heroism of the early air pioneers with the pettiness of those left on the ground. In his 1937 memoir, *Terre des Hommes* (*Wind, Sand and Stars*), there is a wonderful passage in which he relates the time when he and his radio telegrapher were lost over the sea with their fuel running out. With their lives in mortal danger, they received a delayed message from a government official at Casablanca airport, from where they had taken off, which stated, "Monsieur De Saint-Exupéry, I am obliged to advise Paris to take disciplinary action against you for banking too close to the hangars on take-off." Saint-Ex responds,

It was true, I had banked too close to the hangars. It was also true that a man was doing his job by getting angry. In an airport office I would have received such a reproach with humility. But here it reached us where it had no right to reach us. It was out of place here among these scattered stars, this bed of fog, this threatening taste of the sea. We held our destiny in our hands with the destiny of the mail and of our vessel, we had trouble enough just steering to stay alive,

and that man was purging his petty spite on us. Yet far from being annoyed Neri and I felt a vast and sudden exultation. ... We read once more that message from a madman who claimed to have some business with us, and tacked towards Mercury.

In *Terre des Hommes*, Saint-Ex also relates the story of the pilot Guillaumet, who crash lands during a snowstorm in the Andes. Guillaumet walks for five days and four nights “with no ice-axe, no rope, no food, scaling passes fifteen thousand feet high, crawling along vertical walls with bleeding hands and knees and feet in forty degrees of frost.” All his exhausted body wants to do is sleep, but he knows that if he stops walking, he will die. What keeps him going is the responsibility he owes to others: “If my wife believes I’m alive, she’ll believe I’m on my feet. My comrades believe it, too. They have faith in me. I’m a cowardly bastard if I don’t keep going”.

Guillaumet’s greatness, says Saint-Exupéry, lies in his sense of responsibility—“responsibility for himself, for his mail, for his comrades. To be a man, is, precisely, to be responsible. It is to know shame at the sight of poverty which is not of our making. It is to be proud of a victory won by our comrades. It is to feel, as we place our stone, that we are contributing to the building of the world.”

After France’s armistice with Nazi Germany in 1940, Saint-Ex emigrated to the United States, and it was in a rented Long Island mansion that he wrote his most famous work, *Le Petit Prince*. The novella has been translated into 180 languages and has sold more than 80 million copies, making it the 14th best-selling book of all time. But to evaluate *The Little Prince* in facts and figures goes against its very message.

The book’s inspiration was Saint-

Ex’s astonishing experience in the desert following a crash in 1935. He and his co-pilot survived four days in the Sahara, with only one day’s supply of liquids. On the third day, they started to hallucinate and see mirages. But on the fourth, they were rescued by a Bedouin tribesman.

The Little Prince tells the story of an aviator who also crashes in the desert. A prince emerges from a far away planet and tells him about his travels through the asteroids. There the prince met six characters: a king; a “conceited individual” desperate to be admired; a drunkard who drinks to forget that he is ashamed of drinking; a businessman who claims to own over 501 million stars; a lamplighter; and a geographer who never leaves his office to see the beauty of the world. The prince finds them all absurd—all except the lamp-

GUILLAUMET’S GREATNESS, SAYS SAINT-EXUPÉRY, LIES IN HIS SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY—“RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIMSELF, FOR HIS MAIL, FOR HIS COMRADES. TO BE A MAN, IS, PRECISELY, TO BE RESPONSIBLE.”

lighter. “That man would be despised by all the others, but he is the only one who doesn’t seem ridiculous to me. Perhaps it is because he is not only concerned with himself.”

In *The Little Prince*, Saint-Ex doesn’t merely express his contempt for selfishness and materialism, he shows how life should be lived. It’s the Prince’s encounter with a desert fox, whom he meets and befriends, that proves most illuminating. The fox instructs, “Men have forgotten this basic truth. But you must not forget it. For what you have tamed, you become responsible forever. You are responsible for your rose.” It is he who utters the book’s most famous line: “*On ne voit bien qu’avec le cœur.*”

Sadly, Saint-Exupéry did not live to

see the extent of the book’s success. His belief in “contributing to the building of the world” led him to volunteer to fly reconnaissance missions for the Allies. On July 31, 1944, at the age of 43, he set off from an airbase in Corsica never to return. His disappearance remained a mystery for years, but in 2000, wreckage of his plane was found in the sea near Marseilles, and in March of last year, an 85-year-old former Luftwaffe pilot claimed that he had downed a plane of that description, on that date, in the area where the wreckage was found. The pilot also claimed to have been a great admirer of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s writings.

“Perhaps it was just as well that Saint-Ex died when he did, being thus spared the spectacle of a world which would have pained him even more than the one he had actually experienced,”

wrote Curtis Cate in 1970. I’m sure Saint-Ex would think even less of the world of 2009. Like the German social philosopher Erich Fromm, he feared that global capitalism and mass-production techniques would destroy the human spirit and turn us all into money-obsessed automatons.

He would also have been dismissive of the frequent misuse of the word “freedom” by liberal democrats and neoconservatives. “Real freedom consists in the creative act,” he wrote in 1938. “The fisherman is free when his instincts guide his fishing. The sculptor is free when he sculpts a face. But it is nothing but a caricature of freedom to be allowed to choose between four types of General Motors’ cars or three of Mrs. Z’s films.

— OLD AND RIGHT —

Any attempt to equalize wealth or income by forced redistribution must only tend to destroy wealth and income. Historically the best the would-be equalizers have ever succeeded in doing is to equalize downward. “Your levellers,” said Samuel Johnson in the mid-18th century, “wish to level down as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling up to themselves.”

And in our own day we find even an eminent liberal like the late Mr. Justice Holmes writing: “I have no respect for the passion for equality, which seems to me merely idealizing envy.”

In the envious the thirst for social advancement is insatiable. As soon as they have risen one rung in the social or economic ladder, their eyes are fixed upon the next. They envy those who are higher up, no matter by how little. In fact, they are more likely to envy their immediate friends or neighbors, who are just a little bit better off, than celebrities or millionaires who are incomparably better off. The position of the latter seems unattainable, but of the neighbor who has just a minimal advantage they are tempted to think: “I might almost be in his place.”

Moreover, the envious are more likely to be mollified by seeing others deprived of some advantage than by gaining it for themselves. It is not what they lack that chiefly troubles them, but what others have. The envious are not satisfied with equality; they secretly yearn for superiority and revenge. In the French Revolution of 1848, a woman coal-heaver is said to have remarked to a richly dressed lady: “Yes, madam, everything’s going to be equal now; I shall go in silks and you’ll carry coal.”

Envy is implacable. Concessions merely whet its appetite for more concessions. As Helmut Schoeck, professor of sociology at the University of Mainz, writes, “Man’s envy is at its most intense where all are almost equal; his calls for redistribution are loudest when there is virtually nothing to redistribute.” (We should, of course, always distinguish that merely negative envy which begrudges others their advantage from the positive ambition that leads men to active emulation, competition, and creative effort of their own.)

But the accusation of envy, or even of the fear of others’ envy, as the dominant motive for any redistribution proposal is a serious one to make and a difficult if not impossible one to prove. We can, nonetheless, apply certain objective tests. Sometimes the motive of appeasing other people’s envy is openly avowed. Socialists will often talk as if some form of superbly equalized destitution were preferable to “maldistributed” plenty. A national income that is rapidly growing in absolute terms for practically everyone will be deplored because it is making the rich richer. An implied and sometimes avowed principle of the British Labour Party leaders after World War II was “Nobody should have what everybody can’t have.”

But the main test of a social proposal is not merely whether it emphasizes equality more than abundance, but whether it attempts to promote equality at the expense of abundance. Is the proposed measure intended primarily to help the poor, or to penalize the rich? And would it in fact punish the rich at the cost of also hurting everyone else?

—Henry Hazlitt, 1972

Freedom is then reduced to the choice of a standard item in a range of universal similitude.” He saw clearly that modern capitalism, in its tendency toward monopoly and greater standardization, by making man serve the economy rather than the other way around, actually reduces freedom.

The man who wrote, “there is only one form of wealth, that of human contact” would be aghast at a world in which friendship, like almost everything else, has been transformed into a commodity, with “friends” becoming something we collect on websites, only to be deleted when we grow tired of them.

He would also be deeply saddened at the advance of militant atheism, the world’s newest religion. For Saint-Ex believed that without God, human brotherhood—the ultimate aim—was impossible. “I am appalled by the difficulty of having authority derive from something else than God,” he wrote. “One needs seeds from above.” Cate writes, “Although he was not a regular churchgoer Saint-Ex was imbued with a Christian philosophy of love; a philosophy of love recast in a kind of Platonic mould.”

From 10,000 feet above, Saint-Exupéry gazed down on the world, observed the “scattered lights” of humanity across the globe, and came to the conclusion, “We must surely seek unity.” In these grasping, narcissistic times, when Western societies have arguably never been so lacking in a spirit of camaraderie, and when division is the order of the day, we urgently need to rediscover the ideas of a man of whom it was said, “He wasn’t of this world” and to learn the Little Prince’s fundamental truth: what is most essential is invisible to the eye. ■

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Arts & Letters

BOOKS

[*Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*, Christopher Caldwell, Doubleday, 432 pages]

Continental Drift

By Rod Liddle

I LAST SPOKE to Sheikh Abu Hamza Al Masri, the radical Islamic cleric, in 2005, in the blank corporate vacuum of a London hotel room while his extravagantly bearded aides—with great excitement—raided the minibar for non-alcoholic beverages and Snickers. Old Abu was not happy. He held aloft a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* with his hook—his hands were blown off attempting to defuse a Soviet mine in Afghanistan, or so the legend would have it—and then threw it down onto the table.

“I see that your government is lowering the age of consent for homosexuals to the same as what it is for human beings,” he said, with happy disgust. He says everything with some form of disgust, Abu. There followed a brief and unsatisfactory debate between the two of us about same-sex relationships, brought to an abrupt conclusion by his definitive pronouncement: “You call it homosexuality, Rod. I call it digging filth out of young men’s bottoms.”

I had gotten to know Hamza, an immigrant from Egypt, quite well by then and even, up to a point, liked him, although there was never much in the way of rapport between the two of us, not much consensus. Since 9/11—one of the few events in a relentlessly dismal life that had genuinely cheered him up—he had become a sort cartoon bogeyman for the British right-wing press, with his baleful milky eye, scary prosthetic limbs, fundamentalist beard, and copious robes. Not even the most spiteful editorial writer could have dreamed up a creature more visibly alien and averse than this madman—hooky, Captain Hook, etc.—denouncing everything and urging martyrdom attacks everywhere, smiting the cockroach Jews with one hook and the infidel Western scum with the other.

Without rancor, Hamza would invariably explain to me that I would burn in hell for eternity, being doused from time to time in boiling water. God is calling you, calling you, he insisted. Those were scarier times, of course, the days when al-Qaeda seemed highly competent as well as homicidal, days when you looked closely at your darker-skinned neighbor on the London Underground with his rucksack and strained your ears to hear the ticking.

Things have changed, and they have got a lot worse for Abu Hamza. For one thing, you Americans may soon be about to make his acquaintance: he is banged up in a British prison awaiting extradition to the U.S. on a bunch of nebulous terrorism-related charges. I hope you value his company. Secondly, there are his sons. You wonder if anything could be more hurtful for a dad: Hamza Kemal

and Mohamed Mostafa, both in their 20s, were imprisoned this year for crimes not entirely associated with the hastening of a world Caliphate. They had stolen a million pounds’ worth of cars and spent the money on partying and cocaine. I do not know what Abu thinks of this—I’ve put in a request for him to be my friend on Facebook, but he hasn’t replied—but one can guess. For the British, however, it came as a sort of relief and evidential support for a long-standing paradigm—that, give it time, we will win over these angry young boys from the deserts of Arabia with the wonderful stuff the West has: freedom, consumer durables, pornography, and Class A drugs. All this *jihadi* nonsense will stop when you see what we have to offer. No need to blow yourself up to secure the services of 72 virgins—you can have them now, pretty much, all you have to do is ask, Western women being very obliging that way. OK, they won’t be virgins, but still—fill your boots.

This was what we in Europe all thought when we opened the doors to those low-skilled Muslim textile workers and restaurateurs in the years of labor shortages after the war. We opened them again in the late 1960s when Idi Amin kicked the Asians out of Uganda. And in the last 15 years, the door has been well and truly wedged open with a foxed copy of the Geneva Convention, and a city the size of Savannah has arrived in Britain alone every year—not all of them Muslim but a fair few. Not a moment’s thought was given to integration. We assumed that, coming here, they would find us and the way we lived our lives perfectly irresistible. We were wrong about that.

This is the starting point for Christopher Caldwell's scabrous and excellent *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, with its rhetorical subheading (just in case people don't get the message): "Can Europe Be The Same With Different People In It?" As Caldwell puts it, on page one, immigration was sanctioned by consensus among the European commercial and political elites and certain assumptions were made:

Immigrants would be few in number. Since they were coming to fill short-term gaps in the labor force, most would stay in Europe only temporarily. Some might stay longer. No one assumed they would ever be eligible for welfare. That they would retain the habits and cultures of southern villages, clans, market-places and mosques was a thought too bizarre to entertain.

The immigrant population of Europe now exceeds 10 percent of the total, although there is great variance as to where the new arrivals came from. In Britain, non-European immigration has been predominantly from the Indian subcontinent, and especially Bangladesh, but more recently we have seen large numbers arriving from that agreeable adventure playground that is Somalia, some 87 percent of them forever unemployed. In Germany, it is the Turkish *gastarbeiter*; in France, people from the francophone countries of West Africa and the Maghreb, especially Algeria. There has been an overwhelming opposition to the latest influx, particularly in countries that have been seen as historically the most liberal, such as Holland. Two recent opinion polls in Britain, published after Caldwell's book went to the press, suggest that public opposition to any more immigration runs at 62 percent and 79 percent. The figure for the EU as a whole is 57 percent, according to Caldwell.

"If Europe is getting more immigrants than its voters want," Caldwell argues, "this is a good indication its democracy

is malfunctioning." The response from the politicians and the broadcast media, especially the BBC, each time one of these polls is published is always the same: no consideration of stopping immigration or even a genuflection in the direction of perhaps, one day, merely reducing it, but a concerned debate about how we might educate the stupid public to be more welcoming to these wonderful and useful people. Britain has always been a country of immigrants, they argue—a mantra which has remained unchanged for nearly 50 years now and is used to sweep away any and all opposition to immigration, usually accompanied by the Pavlovian howl of "raaacist!"

Caldwell deals with this swiftly, as well he might, for it was always an easily demonstrable lie. Never mind the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons who from the 4th century brought to the shores of Britain no more than 250,000 people at most or the 10,000 or so who arrived at the time of the Norman Conquest or later minuscule numbers of Huguenots; Caldwell cites the latest genetic evidence to the effect that three quarters of the ancestors of contemporary Britons and Irish were already present in the British Isles 7,500 years ago. "Describing

years of assimilation—has been exceeded in just three years of the present century.

Still, you might argue, 10 percent of the population—you should be able to deal with that, surely? The answer would be yes, probably—despite misgivings over sheer population size in these ancient crowded little redoubts—were it not for two attendant problems. First, it would be nice if the incomers sort of liked us and didn't find almost everything about our culture—equality for women, freedom of speech, rights for homosexuals, freedom of conscience—repulsive. And, as a corollary, if we had attempted to inculcate these values into the new communities that quickly colonized the poorest quarters of our industrial cities.

We didn't do any of that; we said that their culture was of equivalent moral worth to the culture of their new country and they should be allowed to pursue it without interference by law. This has led to some magnificent absurdities. A few months after the government passed a law insisting that the religion of Islam and the Koran be treated with "respect," the boss of the Muslim Council of Britain appeared on a BBC news program arguing that homosexuality

THE ENTIRE TOTAL OF IMMIGRANTS TO BRITAIN PRE-1900 HAS BEEN EXCEEDED IN JUST THREE YEARS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY.

the countries of Britain as nations of immigrants is absurd," he writes, "unless you are describing processes which began not just before modernity, but before civilization." He might have added, too, that even those comparatively minor swathes of immigration—those of the Normans and the Norse—were not greeted by the indigenous British as a uniquely enriching experience to be celebrated for the vibrant diversity they brought to our shores. There was, you know, the occasional spot of bother. It is worth pointing out, too, that the entire total of immigrants to Britain pre-1900—that's almost 2,000

was counter to the aims of civil society. The police were immediately dispatched to his house. Iqbal Sacranie faced a charge of inciting homophobic hatred for having divested himself, in the most moderate language, of the Koran's fairly rigorous position on homosexuality: "kill the one who is doing it and the one to whom it is being done." So, we must respect Islam, but simply to express one of its fundamental tenets, even in bowdlerized form, will bring the police around to your door. Presumably arguing that Islam is homophobic would have a similar consequence.

But the second caveat, and one upon which Caldwell spends a fair amount of time, is the rapidity with which the incomers are breeding, to the extent that one of these days, not so far off, “we” (whites) will be a minority in “our own” countries. Caldwell has the stats to hand; the declining birthrate of the Caucasians, the incredible fecundity of the immigrants, the poorest of them being the most fecund, of course. He dismisses comparisons with the U.S. and the speed with which Hispanics are outbreeding whites; this is less of a worry, he suggests, because Hispanics have cultural norms and values very similar to the white U.S. working class of 40 years ago and so the cultural challenge, the problem of assimilation, will be minimal. I don’t know if he’s right about this—you might argue that the Muslim incomers to Great Britain have values very similar to the British lower classes of 1,500 years ago, but I’m not sure where that leaves us.

Even without the breeding statistics, the rate of immigration at the moment suggests that a Muslim majority is possible in some European countries within the next 50 years. Keep your eyes on that flat, hyperindustrialized, rather desolate crescent of our continent from Lille and Metz in France, to the south, to Rotterdam in Holland and even Aarhus in Denmark in the north, where the proportion of Muslim people is already in the region of 30 percent, and rising by the week. That is where you will see the advent of Eurabia.

The arrival in Europe of hundreds of thousands of Muslims might still not be a problem were it not for the painstaking care with which the Western countries have ensured they pick the very worst, most dangerous Muslims to whom they will pay welfare benefits to and later, as a form of thanks, be blown to smithereens by. For this, you can thank the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. The whole business has a fabulous logic to it: the people who flee the likes of Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and so on and claim asylum in the West are those who fear some form of retribution from the

Islamic hellholes from which they have fled. The reason these countries are ill-disposed toward them, however, is because, often, they are radical Islamists who wish the countries from which they fled to be even more ghastly than they are at present. They are not political agitators who want greater freedom of assembly at home, maybe a bit of proportional representation, trade union rights, etc.—they wish to establish autocratic Islamic theocracies and have demonstrated this commitment by murderous atrocities. Once in Britain—or France or Germany—they cannot be sent back because the law states that, if there is the risk they might be roughed up a bit upon their return, it is an infringement of their human rights and they must be given leave to stay.

There was a recent case in which a British court decided that a Libyan Islamist should be allowed to remain at large in Britain even though, the court accepted, he was probably associated with al-Qaeda, had already carried out acts of terrorism against Western targets, and would “probably” do the same sort of thing in Britain, as soon as he got his welfare check sorted out. But he could not be returned to Libya because the probability was that, Libya being Libya, he might not receive what you or I would consider fair and just judicial treatment, trial by his peers, right of appeal, and legal aid. This sort of case crops up pretty much every week. And every week it astounds the indigenous population. But there is, from our politicians, just a throwing up of the hands, a weary surrender.

It is this liberal weakness, Caldwell suggests, that will undo Europe in the end. He concludes that Islam may not prove assimilable to the West: “When an insecure, malleable, relativistic culture meets a culture that is anchored, confident and strengthened by common doctrines, it is generally the former that changes to suit the latter.” ■

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[*Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year*, Alistair Horne, Simon & Schuster, 457 pages]

Super K and the Perils of Power

By William B. Quandt

WHEN I FIRST LEARNED that the British historian Alistair Horne was writing a book on Henry Kissinger, I wondered if anyone had the appetite for another Kissinger book. After all, Kissinger himself has written three weighty tomes about his White House years, as well as a major treatise on diplomacy, and *Crisis*, a focused memoir of the October 1973 War and the last phase of the Vietnam War, to say nothing of the many biographies and case studies by other eminent authors.

To justify another, the author should uncover new information that has hitherto escaped notice or come up with a new interpretation of Kissinger and his role that helps us understand the dramatic events of the early 1970s. To his credit, Horne has partially answered the first of these challenges. He has dug deeply into the massive documentation that is now available and interviewed the man himself. As a result, there are a few tidbits that strike me as fresh.

As for presenting an original case, the author offers less. This portrait is pretty much the one that Kissinger has already drawn of himself, and it is quite a bit less critical than the acclaimed biography by Walter Isaacson. It is, in short, an admiring account of the man in his prime. But perhaps, in our post-neocon era, it is worth reminding ourselves what a realist foreign policy as practiced by a master looks like.

Horne decides—wisely, in my view—to confine his focus to 1973. This was the crucial year when Watergate began to undermine the presidency of Richard

Nixon, the year of major developments in U.S. relations with both China and the Soviet Union, the beginning of the end of the war in Vietnam, and the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile. Most momentously, 1973 was the year of the Yom Kippur War, from which ensued the oil embargo, the stage-three nuclear alert, the invention of "shuttle diplomacy" and the Middle East peace process, and the phenomenon of "Super K," the foreign-policy impresario who simultaneously wore the hats of secretary of state and national security adviser.

I am not an entirely neutral reviewer, since I worked in a junior capacity for Kissinger on his National Security Council staff during this period. Until the outbreak of the October 1973 War, I had little direct contact with him, and I doubt he paid much attention to the memos that I regularly sent to his office. During the October War, however, I saw him nearly every day from the lowly vantage point of note taker in the numerous meetings of the Washington Special Action Group or when he and Nixon met with Arab foreign ministers. It was Henry at his best and worst, sometimes raging about the insanity of Sadat for starting a war that he could not possibly win, then quickly realizing that winning was not what Sadat had in mind at all and figuring out that this crisis might actually open the way for a new relationship with Egypt that would advance American interests.

Kissinger was always hard to decipher. At times, he seemed clear-sighted and able to grasp the essence of an unfolding crisis. On other occasions he seemed emotional, petty, manipulative, duplicitous, and ignorant—he really did not seem to understand the nature of the international oil market.

How to sort out the real Kissinger from these contrasting images? Horne's account may be laudatory, but it is not hagiographic. He offers some trenchant observations about his subject's weaknesses. He notes, for example, that Kissinger's "own insecurity never ceased to surprise me." Certainly Nixon,

knowing that he held the power to make or break Kissinger's career, played on that insecurity and vanity. Perhaps that is why Kissinger seemed so deferential to Nixon. Yet he would also mock the president behind his back, calling him "loaded" after a few drinks or saying that Nixon was a madman. On occasion, Horne finds Kissinger obsequious "almost to excess," but he also expresses understanding. What else, he seems to suggest, can one expect when dealing with the president of the United States?

Almost one-third of this engaging book deals with the Middle East. I am struck by Horne's insistence that Kissinger seemed to have a critical view of Israelis, referring to them as an "ungenerous people" and expressing doubt about Israel's survival as a state beyond the mid-21st century. He further notes that Kissinger opposed the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, calling it a "potentially historic disaster." Contrast that with a quote from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin about Super K: "First and foremost he's an American, no doubt about it, but deep in his heart, he comes from here ... and he's a very warm Jew and for him it is a mission to defend us" (cited in Patrick Tyler's *A World of Trouble*, page 140). One wonders again who is the real Kissinger. My guess would be that here Rabin is closer to the truth.

Horne explores the most vital and intriguing elements of Kissinger's role in the October Crisis, but leaves some important issues unresolved. There is the long-running debate over the airlift to Israel, for one. The standard account, which Horne largely sticks to, has it that Kissinger favored a quick and large-scale response to Israel's urgent requests for arms. The Department of Defense, according to this version, served as the obstacle to supporting Israel—either for bureaucratic reasons or for pro-Arab motives. I clearly remember, however, Kissinger telling then Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger that the DoD would have to take the blame for a delayed response

while he tried to put a ceasefire in place with the Soviets and others. The British were supposed to introduce a resolution on Oct. 12 and, pending the outcome of this maneuver, Kissinger was not eager to launch the airlift, despite the fact that the Soviets were already sending in resupplies to their clients. It was only when the British initiative failed that Nixon and Kissinger shifted gears and authorized a full-scale airlift. Once the Pentagon got the green light, the flow of supplies began almost immediately.

A second question involves Kissinger's visit to Israel after he had brokered the ceasefire in Moscow. While in Israel, he encountered strong resistance from the Israelis to an immediate ceasefire, since their army had nearly surrounded the Egyptian Third Army. Horne quotes Kissinger telling Golda Meir, "You won't get violent protests from Washington if something happens during the night, while I'm flying." Horne thinks Kissinger came to regret the remark, which encouraged the Israelis to break the ceasefire. Others, however, see it as a typical example of Kissingerian duplicity.

Finally, there is the peculiar issue of the Defcon 3 nuclear alert. Many have noted that on the momentous evening of Oct. 24, when Brezhnev seemed to be threatening to send troops to the region, Nixon did not join the meeting of the National Security Council where the decision on the alert was made. Some have suspected that Nixon was drunk. When asked if this was true, Kissinger has offered no comment. Horne clearly believes the allegation, and he gets some confirmation from interviews with those close to Nixon—though not from Kissinger or Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. Perhaps we will never know, perhaps it does not matter, though the idea that Nixon was not in the right mental shape to make decisions in the midst of a nuclear crisis, and that others acted in his name, does raise concern.

Horne retells the Defcon 3 story in a compelling manner even for those of us who lived through it. He accepts that

Kissinger was prepared to order American troops into Egypt to confront Soviet troops. My own recollection is rather different. On the morning of Oct. 25, when we briefly received intelligence that Soviet troops might be on their way to Egypt, Kissinger asked his staff to come up with plans to send American troops to the region but not actually into Israel or Egypt. Fortunately, within hours we were reassured that we had received the wrong intelligence and that no Soviet combat forces would be sent to the region. Maybe Kissinger did send a message to Sadat threatening to intervene “on Egyptian soil,” but if such a message was sent, as he claims in *Crisis*, I think it was a bluff. In any event, I was not at all aware of the possibility of such a course of action. It would have been a logistical and strategic nightmare.

Throughout this book, Horne expresses admiration for Kissinger’s willingness to act to ease Cold War tensions, to finish the Vietnam War, to halt the cycle of violence in the Middle East—at least he did not just react. Yes, but there are still too many unanswered questions about the endgame in Vietnam. What about Kissinger’s charge that it was Congress that caused the failure in Vietnam? Or the bombing of Hanoi? Or the intervention in Cambodia? And why did Kissinger and Nixon, having been warned by Brezhnev and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in fairly explicit terms in the summer and fall of 1973 about the danger in the Middle East, fail to see the war coming or take action to prevent it?

It is true Kissinger was a brilliant crisis manager, but might we have been better off if these crises had been prevented in the first place? Kissinger initially thought Sadat weak, incompetent, and pro-Soviet. He was later to alter those views dramatically, but it took a war, a nuclear alert, and an oil embargo to bring him around. ■

William B. Quandt is Edward R. Stettinius Professor of Politics at the University of Virginia.

[*We Are Doomed: Reclaiming Conservative Pessimism*, John Derbyshire, Crown Forum, 272 pages]

Demolition Derbyshire

By Patrick Allitt

IMAGINE A CHEERFUL, observant, talkative man who, as he advances into late middle age, becomes impatient with much of the world around him and starts complaining. Yes, he’s an immigrant from Britain, but that doesn’t mean he approves of open immigration policy. Sure, he has a Chinese wife, but that doesn’t mean he favors diversity as a social goal. Certainly, he thinks America draws its strength from religion, but that doesn’t make him a believer in God. He is definitely a conservative, but much of what passes for conservatism these days fills him with dismay.

Imagine further that, during a few memorable weeks after the election of President Obama, he records his remarks to friends about everything that annoys him, then transcribes and prints the lot. That’s the feeling you get from *We Are Doomed*. It’s a book that feels like conversation. It has all the quips, gags, and digressions that you get from a natural chatterbox at the height of his powers. Undisciplined, amusing, full of exaggerations and flights of fancy, it’s also the work of a voracious reader, a man who’s interested in everything. John Derbyshire thinks he’s a pessimist, but actually he’s an indignant optimist. His spluttering objections to various aspects of the contemporary scene bear witness to his belief that things don’t have to be the way they are, that they could be a lot better. A real pessimist would survey each new catastrophe, sigh, and take it as further confirmation that civilizations only decline and individuals only die.

If this book has a central theme, it is that the American conservative movement has recently succumbed to a facile, bright-eyed cheeriness, forgetting its long

heritage of skepticism about the human condition. Too many conservatives, Derbyshire writes, welcome the ideology of diversity, embrace big government, support a foreign policy of global democratization, and believe that the nation has an almost infinite capacity to absorb culturally alien immigrants and refugees. They’re wrong on every point, in his view, though he shows a strange reluctance to name any of them other than George W. Bush. Not surprisingly, he deplores the incoming Obama crowd, too, especially for their faith in big and costly projects, but he sees them as different only in degree, not in kind, from what too many conservatives have become.

Once you realize that you’re not reading a pessimistic manifesto in the tradition of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, but merely a long pamphlet urging conservatives to be more skeptical and to remember the need for prudence, everything falls into place. You’ve heard it all before: from George Gilder on masculinity, from Allan Bloom on high culture, from Roger Kimball on education, from Pat Buchanan on foreign policy, and from dozens of lesser lights. The indictments are familiar: federal bloat, cultural decay, feminization, barbarian invasion from south of the border, overconfident military adventures in distant lands. What’s new is the idiom. Where Bloom was solemnly apocalyptic and Kimball fretful and feverish, Derbyshire makes his case in a long succession of wisecracks.

Like many of his British ancestors, Derbyshire is good at picking up insults and giving them a positive spin. (That’s how the terms “Puritan,” “Whig,” and “Methodist” started out.) He borrows Professor Leonard Jeffries’s terms about the “Sun People” and the “Ice People,” but only so that he can sing the praises of chilly white northerners. He also enjoys inverting the Obama administration’s new clichés: readers will smile at his references to “the audacity of hopelessness” and his periodic refrain “No, we can’t.” He calls politics “show business for ugly people” and describes the annual State of the Union address as a “disgusting spectacle.”

Derbyshire, for all his levity, is genuinely alarmed about the state of conservatism, but recognizes that his position in the movement is paradoxical. A few years ago, he dreamed up the neologism “metrocons” to describe conservatives who live in New York, Chicago, or inside the Beltway and spend their lives among urban sophisticates as they sympathize with “heartland” people who constitute the movement’s electoral backbone. In this book, he goes into more detail about life as a metrocon, admitting that in most respects the company of educated metropolitan liberals is much more congenial to him than that of rock-ribbed Republicans. They’re certainly more likely to appreciate his jokes.

Among the complications he has to face is the fact that he’s an atheist. He finds religious faith delusional, but also thinks of it as essential to the future of conservatism. He warns that America’s exceptional religiosity is not something that will necessarily persist. After all, he has witnessed the drastic secularization of both Ireland and Wales in his lifetime; it could happen here, too.

His remarks on education, like those on religion, are gloomy but not really pessimistic. He faults the expensive and bureaucratically cumbersome “No Child Left Behind” legislation as the kind of fantasy project that conservatives ought never to have endorsed. It implied that the expenditure of enough money would solve all educational problems, even though a generation of studies had already shown, beyond a reasonable doubt, that family background was the decisive variable in predicting students’ success or failure. Now we have a situation in which far too many young people are stuck in educational institutions where they suffer “innumerable hours of boredom and frustration” because they are completely unsuited to the work they’re being asked to do. It would be better, Derbyshire believes, to permit youngsters to leave school early—perhaps even at age 12—and move straight to practical, on-the-job training.

Meanwhile, white and Asian-American families do everything they can to get their children into schools where their own groups dominate and to avoid majority black and Hispanic student bodies. Realtors know that this is true, house prices reflect their knowledge that it is true. Indeed, the whole social geography of America reflects this great truth, yet everyone denies it or talks about it in euphemisms. Derbyshire comments, “Mainstream conservatives approach this whole issue ... with the whimpering terror they bring to all matters racial: ‘Oh please, mister, please don’t call me a racist! Beat me with this steel rod if you like, but for pity’s sake don’t call me racist!’” After a few devastating illustrations of his point, notably one about the failure of Kansas City’s herculean efforts

to improve its inner-city schools, he predicts that entrenched educational bureaucrats and the powerful teachers’ union will block all serious reforms.

Cultural decline, no less than religious and educational decline, upsets him. He admits that he catches sight of popular television shows only while trudging from his study to the living room to fix himself stiff drinks. Not knowing the shows doesn’t prevent him from passing judgment, however, and his judgment is very far from positive. He particularly hates the “girly shows” in which “estrogen is practically oozing out of the TV screen and dripping down onto my carpet” and “competitors [sit] around primping while shrieking ‘Oh my God!’ at each other.” He doesn’t even like “SpongeBob SquarePants” and may not realize the significance of the fact that his kids (clearly a capable two-some) call him Squidward. He then shows his true old-fogey colors by claiming, apparently seriously, that he got a big kick out of watching a re-run of “Saturday Night Fever.”

But if popular culture seems to him crappy, then high culture is actual crap. He cites the case of the Italian artist Piero Manzoni whose “Merda D’Artista” consists of high-priced cans of his own “solid waste,” which prestigious American galleries and collectors now covet, especially if they can’t spend their millions on one of Damien Hirst’s works made from rotting fish and maggoty dead cows. I laughed over Derbyshire’s savaging of contemporary poetry, especially the kind that gets declaimed at Democratic presidential inaugurations. He describes Maya Angelou’s contribution to Bill Clinton’s first big day as “gassy drivels,” and Elizabeth Alexander’s role in Barack Obama’s inauguration as “the monotonous, structureless, subliterary whining of nursed and petted victimhood.” Derbyshire’s conclusion about American high culture is that it is arid, academic in the worst sense, and completely devoid of imagination.

Next he gets crotchety about gender relations and complains that, these days,

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women are better than men at everything. He speculates that sooner or later a female-dominated society is going to phase out men altogether and manage reproduction by parthenogenesis. That would be a good joke except that, briefly, the light-heartedness disappears and he offers a bizarre (and surely unnecessary) lament for the eclipse of the martial virtues:

Even war, that most quintessential of masculine activities, is probably a thing of the past. For war you need a large supply of young men. With the great demographic collapse of modern times, that supply is drying up. Soft, feminized, overcivilized, undermilitarized societies of the past were likely to be jolted back into vigor, or just overrun, by warriors from the wild places. Now there are no more wild places ...

Hasn't he seen a newspaper for the last couple of decades? War is in no danger at all of disappearing. A quick survey of contemporary geopolitics discloses plenty of "wild places"—parts of the Middle East and most of Africa are getting wilder all the time. It may be true that conservatives look back with longing to an earlier age, but Derbyshire here tiptoes up to the brink of being nostalgic for the World War I days when men by the tens of thousands were turned into cannon fodder.

By the later chapters you might find yourself running out of patience. The gags keep coming—I won't deny that this book had me chuckling all the way to the end—but, now and again, Derbyshire seems to be missing the whole story. University English and women's studies departments may be ideological minefields, but not the departments of physics, biology, history, computer sci-

ence, and math. "American Idol" may be vulgar trash, but TV at its best ("The Wire") and cinema at its best ("The Reader") are incomparably better than all the 1970s disco films made and unmade. Despite everything, there's still a bit of space left in this world for men as well as women. Derbyshire really shines as a columnist, making his deliberately provocative and pungent points in essays of 500 words. At times, *We Are Doomed* feels like a string of such columns, each rising to its own crescendo of shock and horror. The whole is, in the end, rather less than the sum of its parts. ■

Patrick Allitt is a professor of history at Emory University. He is author of The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities Throughout American History and Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985.

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[*Intelligence and How to Get It*,
Richard E. Nisbett, W.W. Norton
& Co., 282 pages]

Failing the IQ Test

By Jason Richwine

SOCIOBIOLOGY has long been a sore spot for the Left, and with good reason. Our fundamental traits have a firm biological basis, shaped as they are by complex gene-environment interactions. And the more we discover how firmly ingrained our abilities, attitudes, and behaviors tend to be, the less plausible leftist social-intervention programs become.

No biological trait threatens that agenda more than intelligence. With standard IQ tests, we can measure and rank people on a continuum, allowing us to make reasonable predictions about their success in life. Granted, a good IQ score is not the whole story of a person's life—not even close—but it is the entrance requirement for most high-paying jobs, as well as a predictor of marital stability, law-abidingness, civic behavior, and many other positive life outcomes. Biology severely limits the aspirations of social engineers.

The Left's initial response to this argument was denial. Stephen Jay Gould's *Mismeasure of Man*, published in 1981, dismissed IQ research as pseudoscience used to pursue elitist and racist agendas. Much has changed since then, as psychologist Richard Nisbett's new book, *Intelligence and How to Get It*, demonstrates. Though emerging as a new favorite of the Left—the *New York Times* has sung its praises in three different articles—the book actually concedes much to the “hereditarian” crowd. Nisbett tells us that general intelligence exists, that it can be reliably measured by IQ tests, and that scores on such tests help to predict success in school and at work. He even acknowledges that intelligence is partially determined by genes.

But *Intelligence and How to Get It*

departs from the orthodox view in an important way. Nisbett argues that IQ is far more malleable than hereditarians presume. He believes that individual IQ differences could be made much smaller, and he is confident that racial differences in average IQ, which have been stubbornly persistent, have no genetic basis. Since the environmental component to IQ is potentially quite large, Nisbett says, “we need intensive early childhood education for the poor, and we need home visitation to teach parents how to encourage intellectual development.” Despite a yearly price tag of over \$100 billion, Nisbett says these programs would more than pay for themselves.

The book has several strengths. It marshals an impressive amount of empirical evidence in a relatively short space. It wrestles comprehensively with the claims of the hereditarians. It acknowledges the failures of many past interventions and it urges more research before we dive into expensive government programs. But its thesis fails. The weight of the evidence shows that intelligence is a relatively rigid trait, still immune to large and permanent changes.

Nisbett opens by summarizing a standard view in behavioral genetics—that genes exert an increasingly large effect on children's intellectual makeup as they age. From adoption studies, we know that unrelated siblings adopted into the same home will have personality traits that resemble each other's while they are young. But by the time they are adults, the adopted siblings will have little more in common than two strangers. The adult adoptees resemble their biological family, but not their adoptive family.

Nisbett criticizes these studies. He says that children are often adopted into environments similar to the ones they came from, and too many adoption studies examine children who are simply transferred from one middle-class family to another. This compresses the range of childhood environments that we observe, reducing the statistical effect of nurture.

He cites instead eight other adoption studies—three directly, five via reference to a review article—that compare poor children adopted into wealthier homes with similar poor children who were not adopted. He concludes that the IQ gain for adopted kids is “between 12 and 18 IQ points,” a strong claim. A 15-point change in IQ is one standard deviation—the difference between well below average and well above.

Nisbett makes these adoption studies the crux of his argument because they allegedly demonstrate the great possibilities of environmental intervention. He goes into great detail about how differences in parenting styles could affect a child's intelligence. He acknowledges that the correlation between bad parenting and low child IQ could really be due to genetic transmission, but he says that cannot be true because we know from adoption studies that home environments matter so much.

The problem is that none of the eight adoption studies Nisbett references show adult IQ scores. The last IQ evaluations of the adoptees typically occurred in the early teenage years and even earlier in some cases. It is well-known that the effects of the home environment are significant through early adolescence, and they do not typically fade until the late teens and early 20s. The studies Nisbett cites as “proof” that home environments matter are not inconsistent with the hereditarian view.

Unfortunately, no adoption study provides adult IQ data specifically for poor kids moved to wealthier homes. Yet we do know that adults who were adopted have IQ's that are about 13 points lower than non-adopted adults, even though the two groups show little difference during childhood. Overall, the adoption studies cited by Nisbett tell us much less than he wants. A major foundation of the book rests on an empirical claim that is at best optimistic.

But even if we knew that adoption works wonders, it cannot be a large-scale solution to the problem of low IQ. Government interventions can only hope to mimic whatever advantages adoption

might provide, and even Nisbett is cautious about their efficacy. He admits that Head Start and a more intensive intervention called Perry Preschool failed to produce lasting IQ gains. He cites the Milwaukee project, the Abecedarian project, and the Infant Health and Development Program as examples of interventions that have raised IQ, but just how successful were they?

The Milwaukee project consisted of only 20 children. Despite a \$14 million investment, their putative IQ gains did not improve their academic achievement after elementary school. The administrators of the project never published their results in a peer-reviewed journal, and, to top it all off, one of them was later sent to prison for misappropriating federal research funds. In an interview after his book was published, Nisbett admitted, "Knowing what I now do, I would never have cited the study." So scratch Milwaukee off the list.

Abecedarian and IHDP were much more respectable experiments, which claimed IQ gains of about five points by adulthood. These results are disputed—the Abecedarian control group may have had a lower initial IQ than the treatment group, and only the higher birth weight babies in IHDP showed any gains—but the technical details are less interesting than the narrow scope of the debate. The success stories, which require the most optimistic read of the data, involve raising IQ by five points or less. When success means moving people from the 16th to the 25th percentile of IQ as Abecedarian did, a strong dose of realism about raising IQ is needed.

While unwarranted optimism characterizes Nisbett's discussion of raising IQ, obfuscation best describes his treatment of racial differences in IQ. He claims, for example, that East Asians are not smarter than Europeans, citing a 1991 review of the data, but his evidence is 18 years out of date. Richard Lynn and his colleagues have since demonstrated that Asian Americans outscore white Americans by about four points on IQ tests, and East Asian countries have the highest national IQ's in the world. These

results are scarcely mentioned.

Nisbett does say that Jews have higher IQ's than Gentiles, and that whites have higher IQ's than blacks, but his purely environmental explanations of these differences often beg questions. For example, Nisbett explains the superior IQ of Jews by citing the educational focus of Jewish culture, and he ascribes elevated visual-spatial ability among East Asians to a culture that emphasizes it. But where did these cultures come from? Nisbett never seriously considers that cultures themselves could have genetic origins.

A key assertion that Nisbett makes to argue that genes have nothing to do with the black-white IQ difference is that blacks have cut the deficit by more than one third over the past 30 years, implying that we can expect smaller differences over time. But recent gap narrowing is shown by only a single IQ test. Four other major IQ tests show no narrowing of the black-white gap among people born after the 1970s.

By de-emphasizing the role of nature in determining intelligence, Nisbett tries to reduce IQ to little more than an achievement measure. Achievement can be raised by better textbooks, better teachers, better home environments. No need to worry too much about biology, Nisbett is telling his readers. There is no need to face up to deep-seated individual and group differences in abilities, and to what implications they might have for a democratic society.

New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof has already bought in. In an article entitled "Rising Above IQ," Kristof pronounced *Intelligence and How to Get It* "superb" because it allows him to avoid talking about intelligence differences. He and most of the Left can go on with the comfortable assumption that everyone has the same cognitive potential. But biological differences cannot be wished away. ■

Jason Richwine recently completed his Ph.D. in public policy at Harvard University and is a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

Afghanistan

Continued from page 19

that effort has now landed us exactly back where the Soviets, in a supreme act of folly, started the ball rolling. History has looped back upon itself. It's déjà vu all over again, with American soldiers now playing the roles once assigned to Russian soldiers.

Writing 30 years ago, Professor Pipes got many things wrong, but he got Afghanistan right. It is still a place with "no natural resources of importance." Opium apart, Afghanistan produces little that we need or want. It remains a "mountainous territory with a primitive economy, with a population that has never been subdued by any colonial power." As Pipes correctly observed, to occupy such a forbidding country "makes little sense—unless you have some ultimate, higher strategic objectives."

Soviet objectives—centered on the conviction that salvaging their empire required them to subdue the Afghans—proved self-defeating. American objectives—centered on a kinder, gentler version of the same idea—have not yet produced markedly different results.

To persist in Afghanistan will more likely compound the miscalculation that lies at the heart of our foreign policy: the conviction that the United States has no alternative but to use any means necessary to ensure its ostensibly vital interests throughout the Greater Middle East.

The debate that we need is not about Afghanistan as such but about the original sin that eventually mired us there: the misinterpretation of Soviet behavior back in 1979 that has disfigured U.S. policy ever since. If you want a strategy worthy of the name, start by repealing the Carter Doctrine. ■

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of history and international relations at Boston University.

Aw, Canada

Overcoming my aversion to seasonally inappropriate acts—I hate leaves that turn in August or Christmas carols sung in September—some buddies and I made

our annual midsummer creep over the border to cheer on the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League.

Hamilton is a steel and port city of half a million on Lake Ontario. It has history and soul and a meet resentment of Toronto, which in its endlessly advertised multicult glory is like Henry James's definition of a cosmopolite: a little bit of everything and not much of anything.

The Ti-Cats play at venerable Ivor Wynne, a circa 1930 stadium nestled into a Hamilton neighborhood that is as human as Toronto's domed Rogers Centre is hideously sterile. Not that Ivor Wynne presents a traditional tableau: the cheerleaders seem to be recruited from Hamilton's skankiest strip joints, and NFL-ish schlock-rock and TV timeouts offend the game itself.

The rules of Canadian football are familiar yet awry, like one's spouse sporting a fetchingly strange new hairstyle. The field is longer and wider (I never tire of hearing that the ball is on the 53-yard line), and a single point—a rouge—is awarded to a team that kicks an unreturned ball into or out of the elongated end zone. My favorite CFL score is 1-1. Most significantly, an offense gets three downs to make ten yards. Unlike four-down American football, teams are reluctant to either waste a down with a long pass or patiently build a drive on running plays, so a premium is placed on safe short passes. Not my bottle of Upper Canada ale, but I am a foreigner so I do what all foreigners should do when visiting a country: I shut

up and enjoy it and then go home.

The CFL limits imported players to 22 per team, but this is too lax. The league once proved a haven for quarterbacks whose race (Warren Moon) or size (Doug Flutie) ran afoul of NFL prejudices, but today the presence of American players is as irritating as seeing Europeans in the NBA and the NHL. Stay home, mercenaries.

Hamilton's adopted son George Parkin Grant, the philosopher at McMaster University, made at least one published reference to the local gridders. In *Time as History* (1969), his book on Nietzsche, he attached the word "pathetic" to "the performance of the quarterback for the Hamilton Tiger Cats this season." A hardy perennial, that remark.

Before going this year, I reread Grant's *Lament for a Nation* (1965), that rare volume written in response to a specific political episode—the eclipse of Conservative prime minister John Diefenbaker—which endures as a work of richness and imagination, a statement of Canadian nationalism that is far more than tiresome anti-Americanism.

Grant mourned Canada's reduction to "a branch-plant society of American capitalism." He honored prairie lawyer Diefenbaker and those "nationalist hayseeds" who defied JFK in trying to keep nuclear weapons off Canadian soil. The story misfits our lazy assumptions: Grant, an organic if statist conservative, was also a Christian pacifist. The Liberals who scorned Diefenbaker as a Saskatchewan hick were pro-nuke Cold Warriors who

"paid allegiance to the homogenized culture of the American Empire." Grant's reactionary—and I mean that as praise—essay became a basic text of the Canadian New Left. It is as if Russell Kirk had written the most damning indictment of the Vietnam War and then become the éminence grise of SDS.

Grant saw as heroic Diefenbaker's last-ditch attempt to keep Canada from being absorbed into the "universal and homogeneous state" whose HQ was DC. The prime minister, operating from a mixture of "prairie populism with the private-enterprise ideology of the small town," had asserted that Canada was no mere satellite but an independent nation. For his audacity he was crushed by "the full weight of the North-American establishment."

(An aside so depressing that I have to quarantine it in parentheses: Grant's nephew, the deracinated war-craving intellectual Michael Ignatieff, is the new leader of the opposition Liberal Party. Ignatieff, who lived abroad for a quarter of a century, has said, "I do not believe in roots." George Grant, alas, would have believed all too well in Ignatieff, and in the nightmarish prospect of a self-extirpating Canada electing a prime minister who would like nothing better than to ship the eh-saying clods of provincial Ontario off to die in Iraq or Afghanistan for his globalist abstractions. No, Canada!)

Scarlett O'Hara-like, I refuse to think of Michael Ignatieff. Instead I envision George Grant in the end-zone seats at Ivor Wynne, nursing a Molson, cursing the ads for foreign corporations, and joining in a lusty chorus of Hamilton's fight song: Oskee-wee wee/Oskee wha-wha/Holy Mackinaw/Tigers/ Eat 'em raw! ■

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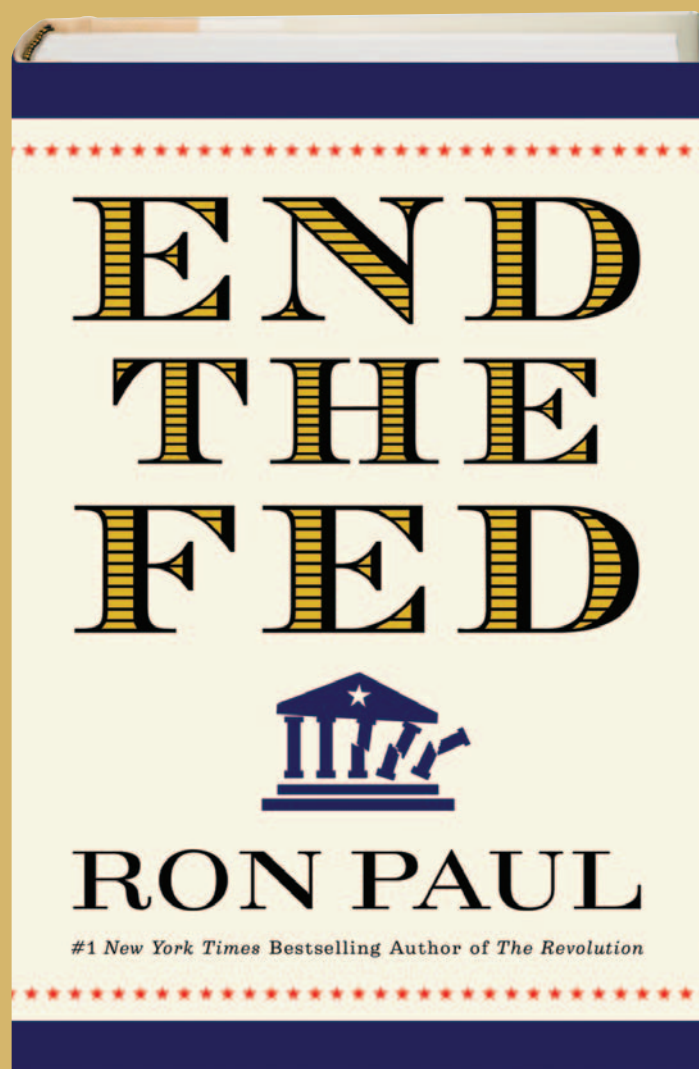


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changed my mind.”**

—Arlo Guthrie





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